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MICHAEL FERRYS.¹

BY MRS. HENRY DE LA PASTURE.

[LADY CLIFFORD.]

CHAPTER XII.

'GREY, but restful,' said Michael.

He was away with Bernard and Winefride to the Welsh hills.

Lady Gryffydd's insistence that there must always be a third in the motoring expeditions he made with his betrothed would have vexed him under other circumstances, but Bernard was of those self-forgetful and gentle few who efface themselves easily; always serene, always equable, and so unconscious of self-sacrifice that the egotists surrounding them remain also unconscious.

The pocket of his shooting-coat bulged with books; he carried his camera in his hand, and wandered off alone, after appointing a time for meeting at the little inn where the motor and the chauffeur were in waiting.

The lovers left the highway by which they had come, and climbed a steep hill until they reached a coign of vantage, where, from an isolated and hidden natural platform of moss-shrouded rock, they could at once survey the scenery and be themselves secure from observation.

Below them lay the slate-grey lake, fringed with pollarded willows and bounded by rocks over which splashed miniature foam-edged waves.

The green hills stretched away above and around them on every side, crossed and re-crossed by low, loosely built walls of grey stone.

Little Welsh sheep, so small and white, strayed over the short, fine, dry, sweet grass that belongs to the mountains; and little black cattle browsed at the base of the hills.

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The emerald green was broken by wheat-fields of sodden yellowish hue, and the distant peaks, with grey clouds capping all, were mournful, misty, and sunless.

'*Un jour couvert*, but restful after the heat and glare and bustle of London in the height of the season,' Michael repeated; and he lay at Winefride's feet, with his elbows set in the moss and his chin resting upon his brown, slender, nervous hands. 'Not but what I enjoyed London well enough,' he added with a laugh that was slightly conscience-stricken, 'long as the days seemed that parted me from you, my beloved.'

'Mamma would not give way about your coming earlier,' said Winefride, apologetically, 'until Bernard really grew angry.'

'I could as soon imagine you angry as Bernard,' he said, smiling.

'Oh, but Bernard has the Gryffydd temper,' she said, rather proudly, 'only it is under control. Besides, it takes a good deal to rouse it. I have only once seen him angry in my life, and that was when he was a little boy and a cross nursery-maid slapped me. He flew at her like a tiger; she was frightened and we were all frightened. His eyes flashed, and Barney said he looked like old Sir Bryn.'

Michael laughed again.

For a little while they were content to be silent; enjoying the peace of the moment, and their surroundings, and the glad relief of solitude *à deux*.

Though the day was not bright, the pure air of the hills was at once fresh and mild.

Michael's beauty-loving nature found pleasure in the harmony of the landscape; the sunless calm of the solitary peaks, wreathed in floating mists, above them; and the green valley and grey lake below.

He had driven the brother and sister for many miles in his car through a beautiful country—past wooded hills, rich glens, ivy-covered ruins, and snug farms, into wilder regions of barren heights, frowning passes, towering rocks, sheer precipices, and rushing waterfalls—until they reached the shores of the still lake, set among the mountains, that was their destination.

They had lunched merrily at the inn, amused themselves for an idle half-hour by the water-side, playing at ducks and drakes, under the exceptionally favourable circumstances of a beach composed almost entirely of flakes of slate, suited to skim the still surface of the water with lightning speed for almost incredible distances; and now Michael was minded to rest at Winefride's feet

and feast his eyes upon her fair face—fairer even than his recollection had painted it, he thought.

Yet she would have presented but an old-fashioned appearance among those acquaintances with whom his time had recently been passed in London; and realising this he smiled a little, but tenderly.

She wore a plain-fitting blue cotton gown, with Quaker-like collar of white lawn. A broad-brimmed straw hat shaded her fair hair and soft blue eyes and the short oval of her pretty flushed face.

The perfect healthfulness of that pure complexion, and those clear eyes, and fresh lips parted over small sound teeth, white and even, added something of the attraction of childhood to the loveliness of adolescence.

Michael's love increased to longing as he looked, and his longing grew to impatience at the invisible barriers which divided him from his chosen bride.

But it was Winefride who broke the spell of silence.

'Did the days seem long to you in London? They seemed terribly long to me here,' she said, with a little sigh; 'but then, there was so much less to distract one here, and you have so many friends in the great world.'

'People are pleasant enough,' said Michael. 'But it is you whom I want, Winefride. I need you more perhaps in London than here. It is when I am in what you call the world that I feel most of all that my guardian angel ought to be by my side, not far away from me.'

'Oh, Michael—perhaps, soon?' she said, imploringly.

'What are you going to do if after all I *can't*?' he said suddenly, and almost impatiently. 'Are you really going to cast me off into outer darkness and never see me again?'

He felt a little remorseful, for the sweet content of the childish face was overcast by the distressful colour which flooded it, and tears filled the blue eyes.

He changed his position and took one of the slender hands and laid his lips upon it. Nevertheless he persisted.

'Are you going to cast me off in that case, and never see me again?'

'Never, never, so long as I live,' she cried. 'How could I live without the hope of seeing you sometimes? Even if we could no longer be—engaged,' she faltered, with a kind of entreaty in her voice, 'we could see each other still sometimes, surely?'

'Winefride, are you so simple as to think that *now* I could care

to see you under such conditions ? ' he said rather angrily. ' That I could bear to be anything to you but your acknowledged lover or your husband ? '

Her innocent eyes grew round with terror and pleading.

' But I could not think of you as anything else,' she said. ' How could I ever leave off loving you ? I should always be thinking of you, and praying for you as I do now. I could always *hope*—'

' You don't understand,' he said more gently. ' Listen, my darling, I'm trying in all good faith to meet your wishes ; but before I leave Fort Aloysius I shall make up my mind finally whether I can or whether I can't. If I'm not convinced after giving myself every chance of being convinced, I shall have to tell you so the next time I come here. And then *you* will have to decide whether you'll marry me or not. If you won't, I shall go away and live out the rest of my life as best I can without you, and there'll be an end of it.'

' No, there will never be an end. While you live—something might touch your heart and open your eyes,' she faltered—' and surely—surely—such love as ours could never change, even if we were parted ? Do you mean, that—that you—you could *forget* me—though you have said so often—that our love was for always—?' her lips trembled, though she strove for self-control.

' My darling, I ask no better than to love you for always,' he cried. ' But what will be the good of my loving you if you are not there ? It is not only your prayers and your constancy that I want, but *you*, you yourself. Don't you see that if you make up your mind that you can't marry me, the sooner I leave off loving you the better it will be for my peace of mind ? I am a mortal man—not an angel full of dreams. But what is the use of talking when you don't understand—anything,' he said, with a little shrug of half-humorous despair. ' There is only one thing that may appeal to you. If I come back and tell you that I can't believe all you want me to believe—and ask you to marry me just the same ; and if you refuse and I go away—*what do you suppose is going to become of me ?* I shall suffer of course, bitterly. I love you and I know you love me, and from my point of view it will be a dream, and the shadow of a dream that is keeping us apart. But, I warn you,' he said with impatient fire, ' that I am not of those *exaltés* who can spend their lives in the faithful contemplation of a distant ideal. I should suffer, and I hate suffering. I should seek every distraction and consolation I could find—sweetheart ! ' he cried, ' don't, don't turn white like that. Am I a brute ? I don't want to be a brute.'

But what am I to say? How can I make you understand? God knows I love you—not only passionately as a man loves a woman, but dearly, dearly, more tenderly than you know—’ he kissed the little hand again and reverently. ‘I almost worship you—but that makes it so much the harder, the more impossible for me to do without you. If you throw me over, I shall slip back miserably but very certainly into my old life and my old ways. Did not your old friend the hermit recognise in me the chameleon, who took his colouring from his surroundings? But if you were my wife I believe I should reflect truly the truth and purity and constancy of your soul, which is as much stronger than mine as my body is stronger than yours. I don’t know how to say it, sweetheart, but I *need* to anchor my soul to a soul steadfast, and loyal, and unshakeably upright.’

‘How would it be unshakeably upright if I let myself listen to you and be persuaded to do what I know would be wrong, because I loved you?’ she said, with a smothered sob.

‘Is that your idea of love? To fail your true lover who needs you so, for the sake of your own salvation? To think only of yourself and turn from me because you think I am a lost soul?’ he said bitterly.

The tears gathered in her eyes, and one was spilt on to the brown hand which held her own.

‘Michael,’ she said piteously, ‘it is you who do not understand. I trust God. He will not let you lose your soul. He knows best. Perhaps it is not by marrying you that I could save you. And as for thinking of myself—’ she broke down and cried pitifully and reproachfully. ‘I have offered everything—my love for you—my hopes on earth—my life itself—not for our happiness in this world, but for this grace for you—the gift of Faith.’

‘You would sacrifice me far more than yourself,’ he said; but her distress was so grievous that he relented.

‘Poor little thing! Always this dream of sacrifice. Why shouldn’t you come to me and live and love and pray by my side? I would rather listen to your persuasions than to priests’ arguments. If you trust God, why should you think He would separate us?’

‘Oh, Michael, hush,’ she said sadly. ‘Your voice is mocking; it is not the Michael I love who speaks to me.’ She put both her hands in his, and bowed her fair head upon them. ‘Oh, Michael, listen to them, for my sake. Try and open your heart to belief. It is so hard for me to understand that it is all dark for you, when to me it is all so clear and bright and happy. But I suppose

I should be *too* happy if it were not for this. I am often afraid that my love for you is—idolatry,’ she said, with a look almost of terror. ‘Perhaps it is because I love you too much that I shall not be allowed to marry you.’

‘Nonsense!’ he said roughly, and came and sat beside her, and put his arms about her and strained her to his heart. ‘Poor little dreamer, who loses herself in dreams!’ he said compassionately; ‘but I will not vex and trouble you like this, sweetheart, before even the necessity has arisen. God knows I am unworthy of your love as it is, without adding to my unworthiness by making you cry. Let us not waste the hours we have to spend together. They may be few enough. Dry your dear eyes, and look at these little papers I have brought out specially for you and me to look at all alone, away from Bernard.’

‘Oh, Michael!’ She was attracted like a child, and like a child forgot her tears.

‘They were done by the very biggest and cleverest architect in London,’ he said. ‘The real ones are at his office, but I had the drawings of the finished building—as it will be—the interesting ones, copied in miniature for you; but they are all to scale, of course.’

And there were the images of Bernard’s dream-monastery and its giant church, as they had once stood towering above the forest trees; monuments of grey stone dominating the green valley, re-created by a master hand.

She was full of exclamations and joy and delight; but suddenly she laid the little drawings down.

‘If *it* is never to be,’ she said, looking at him wistfully, ‘this cannot be either.’

‘On the contrary,’ said Michael gaily. ‘We must get it started at once in *case* it should not be. Then Bernard’s scruples would come too late, and I should have the consciousness of a good work to uplift me in the midst of my despair.’

‘Oh, Michael, how generous you are! How good! If only——’

‘If only the impossible would happen,’ he said, caressing the fair head that rested against his shoulder.

Her blue eyes looked away from him to the mists of the hills, and into them stole the dreaming ecstasy of one to whom the spiritual world is closer and more real than the things of every day.

‘With God how can anything be impossible?’ said Winefride.

They drove back through the wild and lovely country of North Wales to their own sheltered valley, under a stormy evening sky, grey and lowering.

Bernard sat beside the driver, and Michael beside his love under the hood of the motor, for the evening air was chill.

Her hand was clasped in his, and though they scarcely spoke, they had never felt nearer in spirit one to the other.

Michael realised more clearly that it was no longer only the loveliness and innocence of Winefride that attracted him, but also the strength that lay beneath that extreme gentleness: the force of character that she, no less than her brother and sister, had, as their mother complained, inherited from their fiery forbear, Bryn Gryffydd, as well as the strength of principle which made her faith no pretty symbolism, but the stern yet consoling guide of her young life.

He thought of other women whom he had loved, with that passing love that here and there offers itself to an idle man, and is accepted or rejected according to his circumstances, inclination, or character.

Michael's temperament was sympathetic and his nature, as he had declared, not of the self-sacrificing order; but throughout his sentimental adventures, which had been few in proportion to his opportunities, he had preserved his reverence for woman in the abstract; nor had he measured the possibilities of the many by the frailties of the few.

Among them had been more than one religiously inclined, who could nevertheless conveniently forget their faith when it pleased them to toy with sin, though they would infallibly rush back to it for comfort when remorseful or forsaken.

And turning to the other extreme—to principle without piety—he thought instantly of Edith Roath, of her calm strength of will, and high resolve to devote her life to the cause of right, without thought of present consolation or of future reward; then of the pathetic figure of Edith's mother—also a woman pure, and devoted, and filled with aspirations—and he realised that neither had attained that joyous certainty which gave to little Winefride her soft indomitable force. The restlessness of both was a predominant quality, although it was stronger and more compelling in the older woman.

The companionship of Edith had been delightful to Michael; looking back, he did not minimise her attractions nor the relief to himself of being able to speak openly of what was uppermost in his mind, without the limitations which he was obliged at every moment to impose upon himself in the company of Winefride. But he told himself now, as he clasped the dear little hand he loved, that he

needed to idealise his wife rather than that she should give him the comradeship which he would find readily enough among his fellow men ; and that if—the thought just glanced across the surface of his mind—if this country life which he proposed to share with her proved too narrow and monotonous after all, they could vary it as much as they chose by travelling, or by periods of residence in London or Paris—which would amuse him and open Winefride's mind. Everything was possible to the wand of wealth which he held.

It would be a bore to have to shake off some of his old associates, but he would do that for her sake. How carefully he would guide and guard her innocence, though, thank God ! she had another and stronger guide in her own breast. Suddenly he realised that it was the element of discipline that was lacking in the characters of Edith and her mother.

They followed each the wavering light of individual reason and will. Mrs. Roath had, by the light of hers, acted a part for years and lived through a lifetime of self-sacrifice for the sake of the man she loved, only to find despair in her freedom. Would Edith's heroic devotion to suffering humanity end in the same tragedy of utter sadness and hopelessness, when the busy skilful hands would be obliged by weakness to lay down their hard, hard work ; when the calm bright eyes would grow dim with age, and the firm lips falter ?

He said to himself that it was evident that even the cleverest and most self-reliant women needed a religion.

Then his own reason mocked him.

How did their lives show beside his to whom he thus arrogantly assigned the greater need of a spiritual support ?

He remembered the sturdy simple faith of the old man who had died in his presence, full of years and integrity. Old Roath had walked certainly in the fear of God from his youth upwards, faithfully abiding by the precepts his father and mother had taught, following their traditions loyally. Michael owned to himself that as this good man had justified his existence by lifelong perseverance in every recognised duty—as a citizen, husband and father, as a just magistrate, an industrious farmer, an open-handed helpful neighbour to rich and poor, who had truckled to no man, envied no man and been pure and upright in all his dealings—so had he anticipated his end with calm and resignation, never doubting of his reward, and lacking not consolation in the natural sorrow of parting from all he held dear on earth.

' If it is all a dream, it is a dream that produces strangely practical results,' he thought.

Then he fell to reflecting, with much distaste, upon his coming sojourn at Fort Aloysius.

'Michael, you are very silent,' whispered Winefride.

'I was thinking—of going to prison.'

'Do you hate going there so very much?' she said, in rather distressed tones.

'No, no. I shall get on all right. It's a bore,' he said lightly; 'but I would do more than bore myself for your sake.'

She pressed his arm.

'Perhaps I shall fall in love with the monastic life, and become a fanatic, being as you know a chameleon; so that you will next hear of me as a holy monk—tonsure, cowl, and cord complete,' he said jestingly. 'How would you like that?'

'I should know God had chosen that way to answer my prayers.'

'Would you care no more than that?'

He felt that her face was hidden against his arm.

'I would try to be only glad, but it would be very hard,' said the soft childish tones.

'I do not think it a probable happening,' he said, laughing rather grimly. 'I suppose you would turn nun?'

'No; Thekla is to be a nun. I should stay with Mamma. At least as long as she lived.'

'Your old friend the hermit did not like the idea of your little sister becoming a nun. By the by, how is the old fellow? I can't remember his name.'

'Mr. Edyvean. I saw him the other day, he was very well. He asked after you.'

'I'll go and see him,' said Michael suddenly. 'I should like to have a talk with him. He asked me to come again. And I tell you what, Winefride, I'll walk over alone, and you shall come in your little pony-cart and drive me back if you will.'

'He will be glad, for he must be very lonely, and he liked you,' said Winefride.

'How long will Mr. Ferrys be at Fort Aloysius?' said Lady Gryffydd, fretfully, to her son.

'I don't know, mother. I don't think he knows himself.'

'I think he must have a very hard heart, or else an obstinate disposition, to give everyone so much trouble,' said Lady Gryffydd resentfully. 'Why should he set up to be wiser than any of the great men who have believed?'

Bernard was silent.

'I think he has bewitched you all,' said Lady Gryffydd, shaking her head mournfully. 'Here is Father Murphy raving about him now as I never heard him rave about anyone in my life. And Mrs. Kelson pestering my life out to take him over to Cwmcoel, and the *Aberfraw Independent* writing to ask for an interview, and Doctor Jones half out of his mind because he's given him a thousand pounds towards his cottage hospital.'

'We don't get a millionaire down in these parts every day,' said Bernard, laughing. 'They were much worse in Rome. His door was besieged. I stayed with him in his rooms, and I know.'

'I hope good may come of it all,' said Lady Gryffydd, with a heavy sigh. 'But I don't like that laugh of his. It seems always hovering on the edge of his conversation; and I cannot think that any right-minded person, with his fate hanging in the balance, ought to be so light-hearted.'

CHAPTER XIII.

'Now that you have done justice to my tea, such as it is, we will go out upon the veranda and talk, and smoke the pipe of peace,' said Mr. Edyvean. 'Or you shall smoke your cigarette and leave the pipe to me. I was for some reason sure you would come and see me again. But I was by no means sure you would come alone.'

After a morning's rain the afternoon had cleared; the purple clouds rolled themselves together and sank away behind the tops of the firs, leaving a clear sky and a sunshine that sparkled over wet leaves and glistened on wet rocks, and opened a thousand refreshed and grateful blossoms to its late warmth.

Michael and his host occupied two home-made solid chairs beneath the rude penthouse which served as a veranda.

White foxgloves, self-sown on the edges of the little red path before them, were in full perfection of bloom, and the wreathed bowery that arched above the gate below was a mass of white and pink roses. From the interstices of the carefully piled dry wall of rough stone sprang red and ivory snapdragon, and everywhere wet ferns thrust forth their cool spreading fans and uncurled pale, grey woolly fronds to the mild air. Spinning-jenny ran riot over the sloping sides of the steps which led from the garden-shelf to the wild gully below, and spread her web of tiny flower and leaf over

gate-post and wall, losing it in the shelter of the honeysuckle's heavily scented draperies.

The torrent which raced down the glen, starting like a white thread from the heights, became a roaring, seething mass of yellow foam where the rocks below—shaded by dwarf yew and giant bracken, branching valerian and tangled brambles—endeavoured to check its headlong course to the distant river. On the further side of the gully rose forest trees in tiers from the carpet of brushwood—the copper beech beside its straight-stemmed, smooth-barked, green-clad brother; the sycamore's large leaves yellowing from the rain; mighty branching oaks, wild mountain ash, the pointed slender larch, and here and there among the emerald foliage the dark and sturdy yew.

There could scarcely be a more sheltered and altogether peaceful surrounding than the view afforded of this hidden cottage.

'I came alone, with some vague notion of talking to you,' Michael said frankly; 'though why I should want to talk to you, or why I should imagine you would care to listen——'

'Anyone so sensitive to first impressions as yourself,' said Mr. Edyvean, glancing at him quickly, 'is well aware when an attraction is mutual. I do not often let my own tongue wag, but I am mightily minded to let it wag now. *You* may get plenty of listeners, but the kind of listener who would be of any use to *me* does not often mount this steep.'

'Winefride comes to see you?'

'One does not talk to a child,' said Mr. Edyvean grimly, 'however welcome may be her presence. But I forgot—no doubt you talk to her. You are young together.'

'Beside her I feel old enough,' said Michael, with a laugh.

'You are to be married—when?'

'I do not know——'

He found himself struggling with words that would make his position clear to the older man, and, in doing so, realised the more fully the vagueness of his own thoughts.

'Their teaching passes me by,' he confessed; 'it may be that my mind is too shallow to hold it. I try to keep my thoughts fixed on the books they give me, but I can hear all the time my father's mocking voice; and find no answers to his arguments.'

'You cannot argue about religion,' said the recluse, cheerfully. 'Religion is an instinct.'

'It is not a universal instinct,' said Michael, 'since there are people born without it.'

Mr. Edyvean regarded him serenely. 'Tell me of any instinct that some people are not born without. There are always abnormal people. Maternal love is one of the strongest instincts of humanity as of the animal world, yet there are mothers in both creations utterly devoid of it. But this fact does not make you doubt the reality of the maternal instinct. It is not less certain that there are materialists who are honestly unaware of any spiritual consciousness, than that there are people who have no ear for music, or to whom art means nothing. But you do not therefore deny the existence of art and music, which are, to many, as the breath of life. Why should you suppose that of all the instincts implanted in the breast of man, his instinct of belief in the supernatural should be the only illusory one?'

Michael looked at him with grave brown eyes, though their gravity was contradicted by that slight deprecating smile which for ever played about the corners of his handsome mouth.

'The instinct has existed in every quarter of the globe since there has been any recorded history of man—and wherein does man differ from the brutes save in his power to record the past?' asked Mr. Edyvean. 'The testimony of the Unbelievers runs through the Ages side by side with that of the Believers in form and creed; for the Thinkers within and without the established Religions of the world have borne steady witness to the necessity for an outward response to the workings of that inner monitor which we call the Soul—or the conscience—and upon those workings all the ethics of all time have been based.'

'While the belief in the immortality of that soul has been evolved from the egotism of man, who cannot bear to contemplate his own extinction. At least, that is the commonest suggestion, and the most likely, isn't it?' said Michael.

'I would rather say that the belief has been developed by civilisation, together with our appreciation for what is noble and just and beautiful and clean, and our wholly acquired disgust for what is cruel and unclean and mean and ugly. It appears to me to have increased as naturally as the purity of our ideals has increased in comparison with the ideals of the uncivilised past. You do not doubt that the level at which the human race stands to-day is higher than that of the aboriginal tribes from which we sprang; why should you doubt that our minds are better able to grasp higher truths as our imaginations are inspired to present them? All great ideas have, admittedly, their foundation in the imagination; and the most inspired writers have been filled with this inward conviction of the

existence of a spiritual world, and with a mystic, inexplicable certainty of a life after death.'

'There have been others, and those not the least learned, who have preached exactly the reverse,' Michael suggested.

'Aye, others who have only dust and ashes to offer their followers. Neither the hope, nor the consolation, nor the happiness, nor the peace that religion undoubtedly gives, and that human nature craves, *that it craves by instinct*; the one universal instinct—developing the more insistently as civilisation advances—that they would have you believe to be false and aimless.'

'Some crave truth, beyond hope or happiness or consolation, and regard religion as a drug offered by quacks,' said Michael, slowly.

'And what would you think of the man in mortal agony who refused to take the drug which relieved him of pain, and which was known to have no harmful effect if properly applied—on the ground that the relief was merely illusory?' said Mr. Edyvean, grimly.

Michael smiled.

'It is strange,' said the hermit, 'that judging from your face, I should have said that none of the finer and more poetic instincts could be missing from your organisation. You are certainly not of the stuff whereof materialists are usually made; neither of the grosser class who are slaves to their bodies, nor of that rarer kind who, despising alike the claims of the flesh and the emotions of the spirit, are guided solely by the working of the brain.'

'I am nothing,' said Michael. 'Perhaps a sentimentalist. My feelings are easily moved. My impressions do not last. Of this you were instinctively aware at our first meeting. When I kneel in the chapel at Aberfraw—he spoke out his thoughts without apology or self-consciousness—even in the chill early morning, with none of the beauty of music, nor odour of incense, nor glamour of lights and flowers and singing of boys, to inspire my senses—and I see some of the gentlest and most innocent people I know—the simplest and kindest—bow their heads before what they regard as a great mystery—I, who see no mystery, being, as you say, impressionable, feel the awe and joy and wonder of their belief infect me. Something even of the consolation seems to touch me. I feel humble and sad at the remembrance of wasted hours, and hours more than wasted. I wish to—to be good as sincerely as though I were a child instead of a man. I envy their innocence, their peace of mind. I too long to pray.'

'And you would like to reason these feelings away because

they are not founded on reason,' said Mr. Edyvean. 'But you can only reason about facts, not feelings. You might as well argue with a man who is in love. You may prove to him that the woman he does not love is prettier, cleverer, healthier, richer, younger, better bred, and better tempered than the woman he does; but his love is founded on his feeling and not upon his reason, and therefore it cannot be argued away. Yet it is real. For some, doubtless, only real for a short time; these are the shallow-hearted, or perhaps their souls may be but little things. Doubtless there is not more equality among souls than among bodies. The law of inequality is the unchanging law. But in others there lurks an element of the eternal in this love that they cannot explain.'

He ended in melancholy tones, and Michael's eyes questioned him, though he said no word.

'My story may mean anything or nothing to you,' said Mr. Edyvean. 'I am minded to tell it to you; for it is not reason, but feeling only, that impelled me to this life of isolation.'

Michael did not speak, and the hermit went on without looking at him.

'I suppose I had justified my existence, more or less, before I came here. I don't know. Perhaps if I had dreamed how many years lay before me still—but at fifty I was in bad health, in deep sorrow, without hope or interest in life. I had had twenty-five years' work, which seemed a lifetime then. But life drags on, and my working days have doubled themselves. Yes, I am over seventy, hale and hearty yet. I don't suppose anyone would give me so much.'

'I thought you hardly over sixty,' said Michael.

Mr. Edyvean smiled.

'The quiet, the hermit fare, the regular hours, may be responsible,' he said. 'Above all, the peace of mind.' He paused and then went on: 'I was happy enough as a youngster. My people weren't the kind to worry much about me personally after I had once gone to school. I had elder brothers. They grew up good fellows and good sportsmen, and I tried to imitate them. I was light-hearted and easy-tempered, like you, and I had every reason to be both, being young and healthy and popular enough in the Brigade, where I had as liberal an allowance as a younger son had any right to expect. I led the usual life of a lad in such circumstances. If anything I was more selfish and less moral than the average young man of my day, until I reached the age of four-and-twenty.'

He knocked the ashes out of his pipe and put it into his pocket, staring across at the trees on the further side of the gully, with something like a mist over those light hazel eyes.

'I fell in love, and according to my people, and my friends, and every acquaintance I had in the world, there was no reason for it, and every reason against it. The woman I loved had been married before, and was the victim of a man's cruelty and the world's censoriousness. I knew her to be an innocent victim, and one or two others knew it, but it would have been an impossible thing to prove to the world in general, and my people took the general view. My allowance was cut off, I exchanged into a line regiment and went to India with my wife. There's no need to go into details,' he said abruptly—'it didn't do; and the climate didn't suit her, she was a very delicate woman. I came home and found work on a newspaper to which I had sent articles from India—I had always had a facility for scribbling and a liking for it. I went in heart and soul for journalism, and did honest work with all my might—and my early life and knowledge of the fashionable world, as well as my short Indian experience, were all to the good. For five-and-twenty years we were absolutely happy together—'

His voice softened.

'This sounds to you as though I had sacrificed my career for love?'

Michael nodded.

'Well, I may tell you that I never had a regret. I was happier a thousand times with her than I could ever have been without her. I was happier working for my living and hers than when I was practically dependent upon my people. Bohemian society pleased me just as well in its way as the kind I'd lived in before—if it was less unaffected it was far more intelligent. When we could afford it, we travelled; had holidays in Italy, which we enjoyed as people who live in rooms in London all the year round do enjoy an outing. In a general way we cared for nothing but books and each other. We hadn't any children, and we didn't want any. It was a kind of absorbing partnership—everything in common—an understanding so complete that we lived a kind of inner life of our own, apart from everyone in the world. Yet in our youth we had both been rather gregariously and sympathetically inclined.'

He laughed.

'People are afraid to look back, they say, to the days of their youth; but I remember telling her on my fiftieth birthday that the last five years of my life had been the happiest. We had

enjoyed also a small increase of prosperity, for on my father's death I inherited sufficient money to relieve me of any pressing anxieties. Still we worked, both of us, but in a more leisurely fashion. I limited my journalistic writing and started a book, and found leisure for that, and to read to her for hours while she sat over her painting. She had a trick of catching likenesses, and made a little money with her miniatures. She worked quickly as she did everything quickly, and copied out my illegible MS. in her delicate hand as fast as I could write it. We were partners even in that.'

He took a locket from his watch-chain, and held it out to Michael, who looked at it—and again only nodded. But his look expressed sympathy so well that words were not needed.

Something in the pictured face contained in the little gold trinket reminded him of Edith Roath and her mother, but with less of good looks than either. He had expected a melancholy beauty, but instead saw great dark eyes full of fire and intelligence, while a smile, gay yet delicately mocking, curled the corners of the rose-lipped mouth, as though the owner were laughing at the world which had maligned her—but which had been unable, after all, to rob her of happiness.

'Well, just before my fifty-first birthday she died. She had been ill for some time, hiding her pain from me,' said Mr. Edyvean, in a tone from which expression of any kind was carefully banished. 'Towards the end she could not hide it, but her terror was lest I should suffer from it—lest she should be disfigured, and I lose my last impression of the face that was always beautiful and kind to me. And for the first time we both knew jealousy: I, of Death which took her from me, and she, of Life which might hold something for me yet in which she could have no part. You see, she knew me,' said Mr. Edyvean; he looked at Michael with wide, dry eyes. 'As I knew *you* when I saw you—responsive, *insouciant*, not self-contained, but essentially of a nature craving sympathy; the chameleon taking its colour from its surroundings. I was perfectly, absolutely, happy with her; her influence over me was paramount; but when she should be no longer there—? I saw the trouble and the yearning, and the infinite sorrow in her eyes—the mute reproach which said to me—*If it were you who lay here, how well you know that my whole life would be consecrated to your memory, that I should live only to meet you again . . .* but she would never have put those thoughts into words. She had a passionate and I a faint belief in another world. Like you, I was not by nature spiritually minded—

but on the other hand I loved her so intensely that to have given her a moment's peace—' he caught his breath—' without counting the cost, or indeed realising then that there could be any cost, I said to her, "There will never be anything else in my life; I shall be yours only till I die"—and swore it. She died the happier, God bless her!' He stopped and looked at Michael and said, 'I have kept my oath; and before she had been dead six months, and while I was yet sick with sorrow and misery and the loss of her, I knew that I could only keep it by coming away from the world in which we had lived and loved together, and in which we had many friends. I am not the sort of man who can afford to do things by halves. I am not naturally strong, nor faithful. . . .

'Now the reason I tell you these things which are to me sacred, is that from the time when I came here to live out the rest of my life alone, that secret inner reasonless conviction of the immortality of the soul, of which I had always been faintly conscious, grew daily and nightly until I attained to the calm security of faith in God.'

Michael recalled his conversation with Edith.

'Then you too believe that "God reveals Himself to each individual soul"?'

'Those words would have held no meaning for me once,' said Mr. Edyvean, 'but to-day, so far as I am concerned, they are true. Also I think that it is in solitude that the revelation is made most clearly now, as it was declared to be in the days of the early saints and sages. When the voice of man is silent the voice of God is very plainly heard. I am nearer in spirit now to the spirit of her whom I love, than in the days just after she died. I believe there are many, many, though they may never speak of such experiences lest they should be called fanciful, fearing also to reveal perceptions so intimate and sacred, who nevertheless have found that solitude and faithfulness hold this consolation, the solemn yet happy consciousness of the nearness of the spirits of their beloved dead. Not any visible presence, for how should pure spirit be visible to eyes of flesh? Perhaps to you, in your youth, with your life and happiness all before you, this may sound morbid; yet there is nothing morbid save when solitude and grief are attended by idleness or self-indulgence. I will defy anyone who lives cleanly and temperately, and who is disciplined by sufficient, not overpowering, bodily labour,' said Mr. Edyvean, looking round at the evidences of his handiwork with a little laugh, 'to lack a certain

physical cheerfulness which is the finest of all medicines for the mind.'

'And for relaxation—recreation?'

Mr. Edyvean drew his pipe from his pocket, and pointed with it over his shoulder to the books which lined every available corner of his den. Then he produced a pouch of tobacco and filled that pipe once more.

'You said your character was weak,' said Michael; 'I think you have shown, on the contrary, an extraordinary strength of moral courage in braving this solitary existence, and persevering in it for so many years.'

'I can never make up my mind whether my action showed courage or cowardice,' said Mr. Edyvean, frankly. 'But I know the result has been that I have kept one great and perfect thing in my life, though almost all else I have done has been tinged either with failure, or disappointment, or regret, in the light of after years. But now there is one being into whose pure eyes I may look without fear or shame or self-reproach; who will not need to forgive; on whose joy in meeting there need be no cloud.'

He was silent for a long while, as though wrapt in the vision of that meeting; and Michael would not break the silence, but listened with quickened sympathy and with a wonder that the older man, awaking from his reverie, presently divined, and answered, gently and wistfully:

'How can you understand, who have not yet suffered? But you can do this. Ask yourself whether you are a better or a worse man for having knelt in that little chapel, and felt the desire to pray, and to listen for the voice of that unknown Force which dwells in your heart as in that of most men—unless your face belie you—and bids you love what is true and honest and clean, and be shamed for what is false and mean and impure in your own nature. It is true we all know that the Universe is full of mystery for us who are yet pent in our "prison-house of flesh," but why should we hesitate to hold fast that little secret clue we are each, more or less, conscious of possessing? that clue which becomes more clear and certain in proportion as we subdue the brute within us; and fainter, as we allow that to obtain the mastery.'

'I follow, sometimes, that inner guide of which you speak,' said Michael, slowly, 'and I am conscious also of uneasiness when I defy its promptings, and of course I have defied it lots of times. My life since I left school hasn't been a particularly edifying one.'

But I've never attached to that which you would call my conscience any superhuman meaning. It is to me merely memory recalling the code by which I have been brought up to understand a man of honour should endeavour to abide. Still, granting that it is as you say—the voice of the immortal soul within me, that voice utters no word to dispel the eternal mystery of which you speak. And here is my difficulty. I am asked to assent to the proposition that the mystery has been revealed and defined; to stand up and make a brave profession of knowledge of that whereof I have no knowledge; to say *I believe*, though this magnificent structure in which I am invited to assert my belief has been confessedly reared upon a Dream, and the record of a Dream.'

"*It is only for the sake of the dreams that visit it, that the world of reality has any certain value for us,*" quoted Mr. Edyvean. 'In other words, the actual experience of mankind proves that his dreams—i.e. his ideas, his thoughts, his words—survive the material portion of him. On my shelves you will find the Books of the great religions of the world. Through them all—and countless other compilations of the Thinkers and Recorders of the Ages—runs the same thought, the same conviction of the valuelessness of material things, and the immeasurable value of what is intangible; of the abstract qualities evolved from the inspired imagination of civilised man. And in all are embodied the vital necessity of Rule; of outward form, in order that obedience may ensure the triumph of the higher—the invisible and lasting—over the lower—the material and perishable.'

'I too would shut my eyes and obey. I would not cavil at discipline, since chaos must result if the rank and file were allowed to question the decision of their leaders. I would submit to any Rule, if—if I had that inward conviction of which you speak, which I know so many of my betters have—which I know many of the greatest thinkers have had,' said Michael. 'But how in the name of common honesty am I to profess it when I have it not?'

'It will come,' said Mr. Edyvean.

'I could wish,' said Michael, petulantly, 'that my thoughts had not been forced into this channel; that I had not been roused from my happy carelessness of fate, and obliged to spend hours in reading and thought, which has induced a melancholy foreign to my disposition and intensely irksome to it.'

'Aye, it is irksome to be made to think when one is young and full of the joy of life; impatient of all that is not enjoyment.

'I am not so young as all that,' said Michael, with a laugh that betrayed vexation. 'I do not find life a whirl of pleasure; but I found it pleasant enough before I was forced to examine its conditions too closely.'

'There was a time when I felt like you, little brother,' said the old man, nodding curiously at him. 'How you echo my thoughts of long ago! Yet you seem to me now a being far removed, belonging to a world with which I have nothing to do. You will not always be young and full of health and the joy of living. When sorrow comes she holds up a little lamp which casts a strange new light over thoughts that hid in darkness. But if I have an Angel who prays for me, in another world, as I believe, you have certainly one who prays for you on earth. Yet you hesitate to let her little hand lead you to heaven. In your place, I should not hesitate.'

'A man must think these things out for himself, I suppose,' said Michael, shrugging his shoulders. 'Am I so ethereal a being that I can be wafted into heaven on the breath of a woman's prayers?'

'Be thankful if you get in on any terms,' advised the old man, grimly, and yet smiling. 'For my part, I have taken up, and worn humbly for a woman's sake, fetters which during her life I despised, and which since her death I have come to wear gladly enough for my own. I find all I need down there,' he nodded towards the spire of the village church. 'I never leave this shanty except to go there, and never shall, if I can help it. Ah, well! We travel doubtless by different roads to one goal, and the telescopes through which we endeavour to perceive the same God are not all alike, but suited to our different visions.'

'You should write a book, sir, to prove that any religion is better than none,' said Michael, with an inflection of satire in his voice.

'It needs no proof. And you can see I am writing,' he pointed to a table strewn with papers. 'The fever of the pen is one that is only cured by death. I have been working at a book, in my unlimited leisure, for years.'

'A book written in these surroundings should be a beautiful one,' said Michael.

'You can put no beauty into your book,' said the hermit, 'that has not first passed through your own soul.'

(To be continued.)

A VISIT TO THE CZAR.

WHEN a tentative suggestion was originally made a year ago in St. Petersburg that a deputation from our country should visit Russia, the Czar was one of the first to take a lively personal interest in the project; and, after the plan had eventually matured, it was His Majesty who contributed as much as anyone to the convenience of the guests, and who added very considerably, by his exceptional kindness and courtesy, to the interest of their sojourn in his dominions.

Before the departure of the deputation from home it had been rumoured that, in all probability, the Czar would be gracious enough to take some active personal part in our reception, but no definite news had reached us as to what particular form this exceptional honour would be likely to take. No sooner had we set foot upon Russian soil, however, than we were enlightened by a message that the Czar would receive us at Tsarskoe Selo on the day after our arrival in St. Petersburg, and invitations from the Court Chamberlain to this effect were sent to each individual member of the visiting party.

To see the Czar at close quarters is not a common experience even in St. Petersburg. It is not one which often falls to the lot of the majority of his own subjects. To come into personal contact with him is, of course, a rarer experience still, and therefore it was with feelings of no little gratification that we received the message conveying Their Majesties' desire to accord us an audience in their country abode.

The incident was to prove an unusual one in several respects. In the first place our reception was of a perfectly informal character in the small private palace; in the second place the Czarina, who, owing to ill-health, is not frequently seen by any outside her immediate circle, most graciously expressed a desire to be present at the interview, and finally this act of the Czar was to be interpreted as one of peculiar friendship designed to cement the alliance of the two peoples, thus investing the occasion with some measure of political importance.

It was, then, soon after our arrival that we set out to fulfil this memorable visit. Tsarskoe Selo is a village some fifteen miles from St. Petersburg. Its situation may thus be said to be somewhat analogous to that of Versailles in the eighteenth century, or of

Windsor to-day, except that this suburban palace seems to have become the permanent dwelling of the Russian sovereign. The Czar very rarely takes up his residence in St. Petersburg or Moscow. He occasionally attends a function in his capital, notably the annual Blessing of the Neva, and sometimes he attends the Opera ; but on these occasions he often motors into the town merely for the day. I believe I am correct in saying that the Czar, since the war, has visited the Winter Palace only at rare intervals. No functions of any importance, except the inauguration of the first Duma and the Blessing of the Waters, have taken place there since that time.

We travelled from St. Petersburg to our destination by the Czar's private railway. We were all in full uniform—this was in accordance with what appears to be a golden rule whenever members of the Imperial family accord an audience either to Russians or foreigners. At the St. Petersburg terminus we were met by a number of officials who at once conducted us into the royal waiting-room, and presented us to the members of the court who were to act as our cicerones. The majority of these functionaries talked in our language. I noticed that in Russia, as a rule, members of the aristocracy are remarkably proficient linguists, and converse with facility in English, French or German.

After a few moments' conversation, a railway official announced that the train was ready to start ; so without delay we proceeded to the platform and entered the special saloon carriages, which were models of comfort and luxury. The day was intensely cold, but the rigour of the weather was counteracted by the most brilliant sunshine, and the country landscape, which we saw from the train window, looked at its best in its mantle of glistening snow.

It is a run of about twenty-five minutes from St. Petersburg to Tsarskoe Station. At the latter place we were met on the platform by the inevitable cinematograph, which seemed to dog our steps wherever we went in Russia. I am afraid the results on that occasion were not calculated to do us justice, as the majority of our party, although in uniform, were swathed in very un-military wraps and fur coats, which must have considerably detracted from our otherwise impressive appearance ! At the terminus station we were ushered into the Czar's private waiting-room. His Majesty had graciously sent a number of his own carriages to convey his visitors to the palace. In these conveyances, which were driven by coachmen enveloped in magnificent red cloaks lined with fur, we drove off, two in each, along a drive which seemed to lead

through a park. It was difficult, however, to examine the nature of our surroundings, as, in Russia, on a very cold day such thick frost rime collects upon the windows that they become perfectly opaque, and on that particular morning the intense cold made it imperative that the windows should remain closed.

It is only a short distance along a neatly-kept carriage drive from the station to the house of the Czar. On the way I did not catch even a glimpse of the big palace which I believe is at the other end of the park, but I am told it is very magnificent. The Imperial dwelling, to which we drove, might be fitly described as a villa of modest appearance and proportions both inside and out, and answers the same purpose as the Trianon in former days at Versailles. It is situated close to a number of buildings of the town of Tsarskoe, and does not appear to be at all secluded as we had expected it to be. We came to a halt at the small private entrance. The only guard that I saw at all outside the palace was a mounted Cossack patrolling the road. No sentry was in sight. The Czar did not seem to suffer from that rigorous watch and ward under which he is popularly believed to exist. Guards of any kind were conspicuous by their absence. Hidden away in the shrubberies or behind walls may have lurked countless detectives and 'plain clothes men,' but they were not visible to the naked eye. From outward appearances it seems that the Czar leads a life at Tsarskoe peculiarly free from those aggressive restrictions which are considered generally necessary to the safety and welfare of royalty, but of course appearances may be deceptive.

It was eleven o'clock when we descended from our carriages and entered the Palace. The entrance is connected by a narrow corridor with the vestibule. Here we were relieved of our fur coats, fur caps, wraps and snow shoes, always a ceremony trying to the temper in Russian houses, as there never seems to be enough room for this manoeuvre, and the Palace was no exception to this rule. I had time, during the general confusion, to notice a picture of a pack of foxhounds hanging on the wall. The whole appearance of the house was most unpretentious and unpalatial—there are none of the rich hangings and the priceless treasures which are so conspicuous in the palaces of both St. Petersburg and Moscow. Every room looked thoroughly homely, and this characteristic is evidently that most appreciated by its royal occupants. Both the Czar and the Czarina, I am told, prefer small rooms. This taste, in the case of the Czar, has been inherited from his father, who used to declare that he liked a room where his head touched the ceiling. I can

only infer that, if this was his predilection, he could not have found the Winter Palace very congenial.

When we had divested ourselves of our cloaks we were conducted down a corridor by footmen wearing a curious costume, the design of which I was told was borrowed from the Guard regiment of a hundred years ago; its peculiarity being a hat covered with ostrich feathers. We were thus shown into a large dining-room, the only palatial apartment that we saw. Here were stationed rows of footmen in scarlet liveries. At the further end we entered what is evidently the play-room of the young Czarevitch. In the middle of the room is erected what I can best describe as a wooden toboggan run, a miniature edition of the water chute at Earl's Court. Littered about the floor were toy motor-cars, hobby horses, and other material for the children's entertainment.

Proceeding on our way, we next reached the library, whose walls were hidden with heavily laden bookshelves. The middle space was occupied with show cases replete with rare prints and etchings. Above the bookshelves were ranged a series of models of cavalry soldiers illustrating different uniforms and different periods. In the room adjoining, which was evidently an annexe to the library—for here the furniture consisted entirely of bookshelves—we were brought to a halt, and our Ambassador presented us to Baron Friedrichs, the courteous Chamberlain of the Czar, and to two ladies-in-waiting who were attired in black morning dresses relieved by the glitter of gorgeous diamond orders. After this small ceremony we were formed up in a circle in the order in which the Ambassador was to present us. At one of the doors stood a negro servant in a sumptuous red, gold and black uniform, evidently waiting for a signal from the next room. We were told that this body servant, who is always in attendance, was a present from the Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia to the Czar. The Imperial family evidently affect these black pages. I noticed a few days afterwards, when we were received by the Empress Marie, that she too was attended by a servant of the same nationality.

We had not waited more than ten minutes when the black page threw open the doors and the Ambassador led us into the presence of the Emperor. The room where we were received I should describe as a small boudoir. The walls were plain white. On one side hung a large picture of Cossacks on the march by Edouard Detaille, a smaller picture representing the coronation of the Czar, and a portrait of His Majesty. The other mural adorn-

ments consisted of a tapestry representing Marie Antoinette after the famous picture of Madame Le Brun, and a striking portrait of the Empress. At the further end of the room stood a writing-desk. A piano stood at the side. The prevailing characteristic of the apartment was simplicity. On this morning the sun flooded the room and added to it all that cheerfulness which is associated rather with a private house than with a palace.

When we entered, the Czar and Czarina were standing near the door alone and unattended. The Czar was dressed in a neat, dark-green uniform belonging to one of the Rifle Regiments. It was of plain design—a dark-green cloth tunic, caught in at the waist with a magenta-coloured belt. Under the tunic was worn a magenta-coloured vest buttoned high at the neck. His breeches were of the same dark-green cloth as the tunic, and he wore black leather jack-boots and steel spurs. Gold aiguillettes hung from one shoulder. He only wore one order—a small red enamel cross. This modesty in decoration is very unusual in Russia, where every policeman has a row of medals which would do justice to a British Field Marshal. In appearance, the Czar is very good-looking. Although not tall, he is very well proportioned and of fine physique. His hair is of brown colour, and I particularly noticed it was untinged with grey. His complexion is somewhat swarthy, but this seems to add to the character of his face. His countenance is particularly open, and his dark glittering eyes are keen and penetrating. There is a twinkle about them which adds a liveliness to his features, and his expression betrays an unmistakable sense of humour. There is nothing about him which suggests that nervousness which has been attributed to him by several writers who are evidently not well acquainted with their subject. He perhaps exhibits a slight embarrassment in conversation, and this is betrayed by his playing with the point of his aiguillette and an automatic movement of his foot. But, on the whole, his presence seems to convey an indication of power, and of a very strong personality. He has a charming and ingratiating manner. In his conversation he has the knack of putting everyone at their ease, and if it were not for a certain quiet dignity and an indefinable suggestion of strength, it would be difficult to remember that this companionable host is Emperor of All the Russias. He bears a certain resemblance to his cousin, the King of England; but the likeness is not so remarkable as photographs would lead one to suppose. He favours the Slav rather than the Dane in appearance.

The Czarina was attired in a flowing dress of purple velvet, which set off her stately figure to perfection. Her jewels were few and simple, and consisted of a rope of pearls and some amethyst ornaments. She is remarkably handsome, and her features still afford sufficient evidence of that peerless beauty which in former days was the admiration of an entire continent. Her stateliness and her grace of movement are singularly appropriate to the exalted position she occupies, in fact few women have ever looked the part of Empress more to perfection than she. Her expression, although rather sad, is reposeful, and without a trace of the nervousness and anxiety which it must have often been her lot to endure. Her dark blue eyes have in them an expression of kindness and sympathy. Her face when she speaks lights up with a radiant smile. She has the habit of inclining her head to one side, when conversing, which was characteristic of her grandmother, Queen Victoria. The Czarina has a quiet, soft way of speaking which is remarkably attractive, but the most noticeable characteristic is her wonderful natural dignity and grace of movement.

When we had all filed into the room and taken up our places in a circle the Czar began conversing with each member of our party in turn. He talks our language perfectly, as also does the Czarina. We were told that the Imperial family are well versed in almost every European tongue. The Czar has all that tact and sagacity in his conversation, that knack of 'saying the right thing' which so often characterises those of his station. To each individual he said something appropriate in a sympathetic and interesting manner, asking many questions, often throwing in some comment of his own and giving his opinions freely. He seemed so frank and open in his conversation, so free from restraint and so kind. He accompanies what he says with a genial smile, and often a humorous twinkle comes into his bright sparkling eyes.

The Czarina followed and talked in the same way to each of us in turn. Her memory is wonderful. To several of us with whose relations she was acquainted she spoke of her early reminiscences, asked after a father, a sister, or a friend, and mentioned some incident connected with the days of her girlhood. With that marvellous gift of memory, which seems the peculiar property of royal persons, although many of us were unknown to her before, she never made a mistake as to whom she was addressing, and she seemed to be well acquainted with the circumstances of each individual. In some respects it must have been a trying experi-

ence for her, because there were names among our party that must have conjured up in her mind the distant days of her childhood and her earlier happy memories, memories which could not have failed to touch her with feelings of emotion.

For an hour and a quarter the Czar and Czarina talked with us, delighting us all with their friendly conversation, and when the homely little ceremony was over we were ushered into the dining-room, where we were provided with a sumptuous repast worthy of the best traditions of Russian hospitality. But before we adjourned a pleasing incident occurred. One of the party happened to ask the Empress after her children. She thereupon motioned to the black attendant who still stood posted at the door, and whispered some orders which he made haste to fulfil. In a few minutes he returned, bringing with him the Czarevitch and his sisters. The Czarevitch is a handsome, sturdy-looking youth. He was attired in a sailor-suit which became him well. He favours his Slav ancestors in appearance. He has the dark, swarthy complexion characteristic of his race—the intense brown eyes and regular features.

Rumour is perhaps more busy with the Russian Royal Family than with any other, because, owing to the seclusion of their lives, the world has to rely chiefly upon conjecture for its information, and rumour has circulated the information that the Czarevitch is a delicate boy. There does not appear to be a word of truth in this suggestion, for a finer specimen of boyhood I have rarely seen. It was somehow a moving thing to observe this youth, the heir to one of the greatest Empires in the world, destined probably to rule over millions of human beings. How much, one felt, depends upon this child's character, how much depends upon his education and the influences that are set to work upon his mind.

He seemed somewhat shy, and stood at one end of the room surrounded by his sisters, handsome young ladies, simply but neatly dressed. They seemed quite at their ease, and their manners were the frank unaffected manners of ordinary well brought up children. The moment that they entered, a smile of motherly pride spread over the features of the Empress, and she advanced towards them placing her arm lovingly round her son's neck. The Czar joined her, and this was the last that we saw of the rulers of Russia, forming an affectionate family group surrounded by their children.

That the Czar and Czarina lead an ideally happy domestic life there can be no question, but whether the appalling responsibilities and the circumstances of State mar their content or not is

another matter. There is no position in the world more overburdened with real labour than that which the Czar of Russia occupies, and this fact accounts for his having but little time left over for the routine of court functions. But even so, to the foreigner who visits Russia it is a very remarkable circumstance that the Czar does not show himself in public more, or go out more amongst his people. I cannot help feeling that if he did so it would add still more to the already great veneration in which his name is held, for I believe the Russians are a warm-hearted and a grateful people. Moreover, as far as I can discover, they are thoroughly loyal in their feelings towards the Throne, although it is not an easy matter to induce a Russian to say much upon this matter. I was told by a native of St. Petersburg that if anyone in the street lifted up his voice against the Czar he would run the risk of being very roughly handled.

That the Czar Alexander II., the Liberator of the Serfs, was enormously popular there can be no doubt. That his memory is held in the greatest reverence equally there can be no question. I one day asked a Russian official who was sitting next to me at dinner, whether the Russian 'man in the street' was really grateful to Alexander II. His answer was that in St. Petersburg public institutions are given the names of the Czars to perpetuate their memories, but that no such institution is called after Alexander II. because his memory will always live in the hearts of the Russian people. The memory of his good deeds will live without such assistance. If this is true, it must be inferred that the Monarchy can be as much popularised in Russia as it can be in other countries; but it is difficult for a foreigner to dogmatise upon this subject. He can only be left wondering whether a little more personal contact between a Sovereign, who is so obviously a good man, and his people, who are on the whole thoroughly loyal, would not make for a still happier situation. This was certainly one of my reflections as I left the palace of Tsarskoe Selo; but, as I said before, a foreigner has no right to dogmatise upon this subject. We at home are accustomed to the thought that monarchy must not only be broad-based upon a people's will, but that the interdependence of monarchy and people must be cemented by feelings of affection as well as reverence. These feelings could not be as real and intense as they are to-day were it not for the frequent personal contact between our beloved Sovereign and his loyal subjects.

'FELONY TO DRINK SMALL BEER.'

BY SIR JAMES YOXALL, M.P.

I.

LANYON frowned at the newsboy. A poet missing? Well, and why not? 'In every one of us a poet lie dead!' he growled; 'what are we but walking sepulchres of people we used to be?' The newsboy and his placard drew off.

'Strange Disappearance! Well-known Poet Missing!' All down Oxford Street that legend and paper tabard of the modern herald had taken the eye. The news had been yelled, so to speak, in a harsh, unmannerly voice of capital letters five inches high, and 'Absurd!' Lanyon said to himself, 'who in England misses poets? Or have we poets to be missed?'

But you cannot reason with an early-morning edition of an evening newspaper. 'Well-known Poet. . . . Poet Missing. . . . Missing Poet'—all the dusty April way to Holborn Viaduct my friend Lanyon had heard that typographic shout, what time he dodged the taxicabs and motor-buses, those stormy petrols of the roaring streets. 'In every one of us a Laureate lies stifled, a marvellous boy who perished in his pride!' he said, and the next instant a 'Monster' omnibus swooped at him, missing him by a safety-shave, and ponderously trundling on. 'Eighth of an inch, and a well-known lawyer would have been missing!' he gasped. And indeed, why not? What had he deserved, that this moving Tower of Siloam should not have fallen upon him quite? Had he not allowed the poet within him to die of inanition, starved on life's small beer?

Though that was long ago, and everybody did it, and—perhaps the inner poet was not quite dead, and . . . at any rate the motor-omnibus could have been no conscient engine of eternal justice, for it would just as blindly erase a Virgil or eliminate a saint; St. Augustine himself, did he visit a city so different from his ideal, would have to dodge the motor-buses at Charing Cross. And if Tennyson could return to 'streaming London's central roar,' not even his wide-awake, cape, and noble presence would awe the leathery Jehus into caution. Lanyon laughed aloud, in the street, which is almost a sign of lunacy in London; he was remembering an urchin who, all but run over by a motor-hearse, shouted 'Greedy!' to the Jehu in black.

Then the 'Strange Disappearance' again struck the eye, all down the gutter. *What* was this? A poet on a placard? And a poet 'well-known'? Had it been a negro bruiser, now, or, a Russian dancer, or a duodecimo jockey, one might have seen the bait in the placard, but—a *poet* missed? These putty-complexioned City folk, anxious and quick-going, streaming through 'London's central roar' in two streaks of black and pallor, when had they ever missed poets? Every defaulter upon Parnassus or its foothills might be 'hammered' and the Stock Exchange not care a quotation, Lanyon thought.

And yet 'Speshull! Poek missin',' a newsman was growling near St. Sepulchre's. Preposterous! Special editions for a poet? Where then were All the Winners? And the Poison Mystery in Pimlico? Was not Our Naval Supremacy in Danger? Or what of the Perilous Position of Chelsea at Half-Time? Had all alarums, cataclysms, and scandals failed the placard-writers, that they must fall back on that sad figure a poet in England, giving him bold advertisement too late?

Suddenly Lanyon seemed to see the wretched *scald* and *vates* go vanishing into night and nothingness, head down, butting through a bitter wind to find an egress, far from life's daily swipes. He had striven, but now was stranded; he had been a Leander, but was now cast back upon the shore. Yet who but he had sang this rondeau of the splendid struggle?

'My love, my wife, three months ago
I joined the fight in London town:
I haven't conquered yet, you know,
And friends are few, and hope is low.
Far off I see the shining crown.

'I'm daunted, dear; but blow on blow
With ebbing force I strike, and so
I am not felled and trodden down,
My love, my wife!

'I wonder when the tide will flow,
Sir Oracle cease saying No,
And fortune smile away her frown?
Well, while I swim I cannot drown,
And while we sleep the harvests grow,
My love, my wife.'

Daunted now, he was fleeing miserably, to be missing without being truly missed, and to drown. It was he who had written 'The Pilgrimage of Strong-Soul,' and of the train that had 'just

left Pilgrimstow Station, a hundred golden windows that moved over the golden sky, and brought it close and warm to the faces of the happy souls that were surely being whirled away to heaven.' But the dogging foot of despair was close behind him again, his frenzy saw a long train of duns and pedants streaming after him in pursuit—reviewers inept or revengeful, debit ranks of pounds and shillings posting after him with writs and executions, vain efforts and haggard hopes all shrieking upon his track. Oh! he must manumit and enfranchise himself, from this pilgrimage of slavery, and so he decamps, evades, recants, renounces, yields up the small beer of life and its poesy too. His unfashionable garments flapping in the wind, he plunges into darkness unlit by any even distant gleam of any shining crown. . . .

Lanyon turned into a famous shop for a cigar. 'I am glad I let the poet in me die,' he thought, as he lit that bit of luxury. 'Not here, O Apollo, are haunts meet for thee!' he quoted, as he came out into Cheapside, where the poet is oftenest minus and the hurrying faces show the most strained and anxious of all. The steadfast and beautiful Cathedral reproached him in a glimpse, but he went on. No, he had wisely ceased to nurse unconquerable hopes and clutch at inviolable shades. Yet—had he? Did people think so? 'Lanyon! *You* here?' a hurrying Midas of his acquaintance found time to say as they passed each other. 'Get out of the City as fast as you can!' 'Must see my stockbroker!' Lanyon answered, and tried to wear a City air. But the hubbub and hustle and bustle swelled upon him like the noise of many waters, deafening and buffeting him; until the corner of Wood Street uplifted him, for there at the corner of Wood Street stood the Tree.

He hailed that green witness of the spirit, and he began to utter metrical noises, which others in Cheapside mistook for madness. He only of them all, perhaps, knew this to be the Tree which Wordsworth saw. This was the noble vegetable, the sight of which made a caged bird sing its little heart out, every Spring and Summer morning; this was the great shrub and green-burning bush that Susan from Wastdale saw. 'At the corner of Wood Street,' he began aloud.

'At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
There's a thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years—'

Somebody's confidential clerk sheered off from this spouting zany, but the zany quoted on,

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
 A mountain ascending, a vision of trees:
 Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
 And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.'

To Lanyon, as to Susan from Wastdale and to Wordsworth—and to many a City man at times—that burning bush and high green halo brought deliverance, the vision, the momentary gleam that redeems and transcendentalises all.

But it fades, it is momentary only; only the sordid things persist. Here was the corner of Bread Street, where Milton was born, and yonder the Mansion-House that he sang; but the rapt, excessive mood had passed. Reaction had swooped; 'Poetry?' said Lanyon to himself, 'what is it but mystero-magic, feats of juggling with words? Poetry books are volumes of vapour quite out of place in Lothbury. Milton was doubly blind, he never saw the real world at all. Here's my stockbroker's.' And he went up in the lift, killing the poet anew.

Yet Lanyon, when younger, had written this:

'When April was blossom
 And June was a rose,
 Life sang at my skylight
 With nightingale throat:
 And rapt was the note
 Of love in the twilight,
 When April was blossom
 And June was the rose.'

Maybe it is better to be a poet missing than a mercenary found.

What necessary antinomy is there, however, between the stockbroker and the poet? Shakespeare and Tennyson gained affluence, and they were poets indeed. All idealists do not drown, all stockbrokers do not flourish, no Chatterton need die in a garret, many a City man is transcendental at home. Barter may be *bonne et belle*, business may still be done *largo*, to great slow music, and lyrics chant to bills of lading and way-leaves. Duns, debit figures, and the merciless years relent at last, if steadfastly oppugned; poets who drown are Leanders too feeble, or derelicts with the wrong aim.

II.

For the wise Leanders strive towards no mere Hero of Sestos; there are brighter lamps than the cresset she waves, or her eyes.

Her arms are a siren's—many a man has drowned within them—wisdom and fortitude strive towards something colder, whiter, nobler—the marble of fame's pantheon or duty's chapel, sedilia of honour, triumph's arch. Yonder they gleam with sunset, glorious as victory with banners, and—'Chilly as the Hellespont itself,' said Lanyon, vindictively. 'Those ambitious fellows miss the warm human joys—the sense of beauty, delight and love.'

Yet he sighed. He had known a few Leanders—he had seen them launch and watched them navigate—they had left him behind, on the beach at Abydos, residual, and afraid. They, no less than he, had known the perils waiting, the tusks of rock, the fagging power of the water, the prisons of unscalable cliff if they wrongly drove ashore; but while he shivered and lingered they were dropping their raiment on the beach. He had seen their arc-like plunge: up flapped the slapping waves instanter, the spindrift spat, pain, breathlessness, chill and nausea sprang upon them, they gasped and flagged, and some of them sank. 'They are sunk till settling-day,' Lanyon said, 'but at least they won't have to scurry around with a shovel then, as I shall, digging out a tarnished old talent "laid up in a napkin," that I ought to have put out at good interest in some stock of effort or share of duty, through somebody on an exalted 'Change.

'The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin.'

Sadly he quoted that.

His mood had swiftly altered—a symptom of instability which is characteristic of frustrate Leanders. He had now come to the sea-wall of the Thames, and was staring into the Pool. Achievement there—rest after crossing ocean Hellesponts, there—argosies there, that Halswelle and Brangwyn had painted; a panel at Lloyd's glowed with the glory of the 'Golden Hind.' Hence argonauts had spread their sails and set forth, Leanders of the main, what time the longshoremen cheeked the narcotic quid and swigged the petty swipes. 'A kind of foolish virgins, they,'—grimly he smiled at the incongruous—'with the candle out, and the yielding, ungirt loin.' For the wise Leander forefends, makes ready beforehand; he creates opportunities, while longshoremen lounge waiting for chances to befall. The wise Leander arms towards no mere Aphrodite, no Spanish gold or black ivory, but to fame or wisdom, high service or

consummate art. His distant Hero's lamp can be seen from the top of the waves only, and often in the troughs he despairs. Sometimes the light seems blown out altogether, by gusts which infest the surface of the water; and then the enticement comes, and the song of the Sirens is heard. 'Retract and retrace, fool!—tread water, and then retreat! Drift back to Abydos, to rest and dalliance, to the longshore quid and the banker's quids, idle joys and the malty smack of beer!' The Leanders listen, and some of them yield. 'I did!' Lanyon said to himself, 'it comes over you so, on the edge of the dangerous forties of your life!' But it is a lying undertow, a wheedling current; rest, if it is to be rest and not ennui, or daily self-reproach, must come when earned, at the golden close of busy, honourable longevity. It is only at long last that you clutch the inviolable shade, that wise virginity. Meanwhile, to doubt is fatal; marked if you are on the forehead with the seal of yearning and the bar-like furrow of dreams, to jettison your illusions is to go down.

'A good deal of it is knack with those fellows after all,' Lanyon said savagely, as he seemed to see a shoal of them finning it to the further shore. 'The Hellespont itself gets to help you at last,' one of them had told him, in a rare moment of confession. 'Struggle till you get into the swim—till the tide or current helps you along!' 'Mere knack! And forming the habit of work!' Lanyon growled. 'Those fellows are debauchees of industry, they can't be temperate, they are drunk with sedulity,—it is a possession, a disease! But the ruck of us are feeble, coney-folk, I'll allow,' he went on in the gathering darkness. 'We don't dare and do:—half the successes in life are fruits of mere audacity:—we can't powerfully will. We miss the moment, we falter and palter at some turning-point in the necessary, tedious way, we shirk in the crises of trial. And then we sham a renunciation, and talk sour grapes, compunctious and ashamed though we are all the while.

'And we let new chances slip by uncaught, because we missed one particular opening in the past. "Too late now!" we grumble, though it's never too late to mend till the end, I suppose. Some of us hie us to Capua, but most of us dawdle on here, on the same weary old foreshore. Playthings and small beer distract our ennui a little—games at billiards, bridge, the theatre, the music-hall—afternoons at the Club—a particular *cru* of whiskey—a *Lais* perhaps, or some honest, simpering Gladys of a girl—my God, we soon cease to see any route ahead at all! If we move we go like

blind men, tapping our way along, or like infants, tottering from one support to another from an armchair to a woman's arms! And we emit a jealous bile, belittling what our betters have done.

'So here we abide, and here the ironic hours pass us by. We fritter and crumb away the bread of existence; we err and lag on the shore, vague, blown in the wind like sand. Sometimes we explain, to candid friends who expected more from us: like unsuccessful actors we say we are "resting," or we blame our ill-health, or tell how our enemies have "kept us back." The days die past us, months and years heap a cairn around us, and soon it will be a grave. We listen for the post in the mornings, hoping some magical, transforming letter of announcement; we watch the calendar, but there are no red-letter days left in it—we have missed, left undone, and yet not truly rested; neither the triumph nor the suavity of life has been ours. Each birthday of ours is as a telescope turned to the rear, upon the pitiful hindward track. We perceive so clearly then the corner where we fatefully stepped aside, the apparent short-cut which embogged us, the walls of a rut we incautiously entered, the labyrinth in which we became enmeshed.

'Better be a Missing Poet! The Leander fellows are far off from all that! Still battered at by the storm, continually needing to be deft and resourceful, but glad, I expect, with the delight of battle almost all the time. Now and then, in a lull of the waves, they think back to us, with a pity more *cinglant* than contempt. What do they say of us to each other sometimes? "Those fellows at Abydos, do they suppose they are alive? Life is *this*, isn't it?—this ecstasy of strife and effort! Those fellows yonder might as well be dead!" Then, perhaps because they had boasted, the worst of the water leaps upon them in that moment of brag—the down-dragging undertow, the stabbing tempest of rain, the suck of the whirlpool, the pounding of breakers upon rocks. Some of them go down in that, as the poet on the placard did, powerless to reach on to utter self-vindication and sheer success. But the strongest react even yet, they call up and use the last ounce of force, and fight till all but the last breath. Then suddenly, and astoundingly even to them, their feet feel the immutable shore.'

He set his teeth. 'And then—then they do what they aimed to do. Pretty solemn and humble they are about it, I expect, but—one fellow hangs his picture on the jealous line for ever, and another ranks his books upon the guarded shelf; the student and

the explorer announce their discoveries before the *Académie* or Royal Society of Sestos ; in its Valhalla the soldier hangs up his shield. And the engineer of human progress completes his bridge across the darkness and the slime.'

III.

He turned from the darkness and slime of Thames-side, coming out into Eastcheap, where 'Result of the Sweepstake' the placards were yelling now. 'A sweepstake it all is, I daresay,' he told himself. 'Yet I wish Cade *had* made it felony to drink small beer !' Then he took a taxicab home, where I was to dine with him that night, as his sole guest and old familiar friend.

'No, I slept worse than usual,' he said to me in his billiard-room, when all the dear folk of his household were abed. 'I lay awake quite a couple of hours. That was how I happened to see him again, I suppose.'

I set down my cigarette. Nothing that Lanyon may say can surprise me ; he is a Celt and a *poète manqué*, which explains. 'See whom ?'

'The young hopeful I used to be. I thought he was dead, but his touch did not seem to be cold.'

I give no rap for the man who does not know when to be silent ; silence is diamond rather than golden, at times.

'The young beggar must have died thirty years ago, but his touch did not seem to be clammy. Maybe there's a comfortable warm sphere somewhere, for our bygone selves to inhabit, clad in the bodies we used to wear,—doctors say there's a total waste of our tissues every seven years. The fellow was therefore real. Not the least aura of ghostly terror about him. I turned my face quite tranquilly, it was as though Lucilla had come into my room—as though she had touched my cheek, or I had touched myself. . . . That touching of oneself, by the bye—have you ever thought of its unaccountableness ? A self in the apprehending fingers, conscious of a self in the touched hair or knee. Just notice a woman fingering her hair to arrange it better, in an opera-box, when no mirror is near !

'But the question is, do our younger selves live on, after we have ceased to be they ? I remember a line of Eighteenth-century simile-poetry—'O my coevals, remnants of ourselves !'—that's

one of Dr. Young's night-thoughts, I believe. Am I a remnant of myself or a different being?—that's the point! Of course I knew the fellow instantly; there was no face I knew so well as his thirty years ago, not even the girl's he was in love with, the young ass. . . . But here's where the puzzle comes in—how on earth, or elsewhere, should he be able to know *me*? I mean the me I am now?'

Lanyon looked up, so I had to say something. 'How do twins know each other from themselves?'

'Anyhow, we knew each other at once. Just as you and I will again, old crony,' Lanyon went on, 'when we have paid the obolus to Charon, and sit communing of our past together, while the ferry-boat nears a dull and foggy shore.' He shivered. 'Not just yet, that, however; we'll wear out three or four suits of new tissue first, I hope. As for *his* clothes, they were old-fashioned, of course. I went to a cheap tailor's in his days.

'There he stood, twisting his moustache—I wore no beard then—looking at me with such a confounded air of disappointment, such surprise and displeasure in his face, that of course I knew why. Imagine him coming through Heaven knows what regions of time and space to see me, and finding me the porsy, podgy fellow I am, materialistic and all that—not the least the sort of fifty-year-old paragon he had a right to expect me to be. "Not a bit of good looking at me so eloquently," I said. "You expected too much. If I'm not what I ought to be, it's partly your fault. I remember what you dreamed of becoming. Do you suppose I don't often think of what you—I mean what I—of what *we* meant I—I mean *we*—should be, at fifty years old? But circumstances alter cases, and—" . . . I went on explaining; tendencies latent in him had developed in me, I told him; the poet had died of inanition, a lawyer and speculator had developed instead. From a worldly point of view I was considered successful, but spiritually I had met with quite a run of ill-luck. Besides, I had not enjoyed such good health as he did. And so on, and *da capo*. He listened politely enough.'

Lanyon paused, made the decanter and tumblers clink, and clasped his hands behind his head. 'The young spark had not deteriorated. He had all his hair and teeth, he was lissom and straight—no stoop like yours, old bookworm, and no paunch like mine. He was the new house of which I see the ruins in the mirror every morning. I don't believe he dreamed what neuritis or liver meant—not an ache in his muscles, not a corn on his toes. I began

to dislike him strenuously, last night, by ill-will bred of resentment out of shame. You see, he was just the chivalrous young hopeful I used to be, and—.' Lanyon took up his glass.

'Life and vision had been at their fairest for him :—to him the world seemed a place for splendid derring-do. *I*—I will not try to tell you what I think of the world to-day. The ambition of that young sprig, too! His starry aims, his confident going forth to conquest! He thought he held the world in his hands, a throbbing electrical globe which thrilled and invited, like a woman's breast. He could spy the high portal of Fame, he would seal his name upon it indelibly. . . . *I* have let the globe slip and roll out of reach.

'He was to be lord of Babylon, nothing less! "I take possession of London!" he said to himself when he came up from the provinces to the centre of things. "I have fought my way here, I shall forge to the front of the front!" His ambitions were not selfish only—he was to tread down tyrannies, unbare insulted verities, mend a cracked world. . . . Even that's not the worst of it—he was trustful, candid, magnanimous, affectionate, devout.' Lanyon's cigar had gone out; he held it, cold, at his lips.

'Last night, when he was gone again, I lay thinking back upon the years. He had but one septennium in which to grow to the splendid young fellow he was, for the seven years of his childhood and the seven of his boyhood hardly count. Seven years he had had, to wax in; *I* have had thirty since then, in which to wane. . . . No, no, old fellow, *I know what you would tell me*'—he had put out his hand. 'You would tell me I am well-to-do and noted, esteemed by some, feared by others, and envied by many, *I suppose*. That is success in life, you would tell me: I know; do you suppose I don't know? But—'

He ceased, and I leaned across the hearth. 'Lanyon,' I said, 'shall I tell you which is the better part of life?'

'I wish you could,' said he.

'It is not to be rich, famous, envied, a dweller in a little palace of a place like this. And it is not to be a saint, a philanthropist, or a poet even. Old friend, I have learned to suspect the specialists, and you yourself have come close to not a few great men who ring hollow. I doubt if a Bishop is holier than another, or a politician more altruistic, or a donor more benevolent; much of it is *façade*. The best thing in life, and the first duty in it, is to be a good father and husband and friend. When that supercilious, insufferable young

beggar came to you last night, a dear being—one of the women who make us ashamed of being men—lay sleeping in the next room. She did not hear him, he did not see her—'

'He wouldn't have known her,' Lanyon said—'it wasn't Lucilla he meant to marry—'

'And upstairs,' I went on, 'a boy and a girl are asleep. You'll peep in on them before you go to your own room. And you will thank God, or ought to, by all the right of their health and sweetness, that loving and bonny they are, so wholesome, happy and bright! And that's the best part of a man's life, old fellow, and the part that was youth's is as nothing to that. Wife and children, home and love—we live by them and in them, don't we? So we ought to live for them, most of all. And this is no small beer. Success? What is success? Success is a relative thing—you must measure it from the point at which you started. What is success for a proletarian is failure for the son of a peer. If that young spark comes again, send him off with a flea in his lug. It is fudge, your Missing Poet; it's fudge, your wise Leanders; and it's fudge, most fudge of all, your younger self!'

DRAKE.

BY SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

THE production of the pageant-play of 'Drake' at His Majesty's Theatre has resuscitated interest in Sir Francis Drake, and has caused the appearance contemporaneously of reviews of his career and achievements. In passing the whole of this material through the digestive selection of the brain one arrives at the conclusion that the play-writer, essayist, and even occasionally the modern minor historian are presumably of the opinion (1) that Drake was a man of handsome appearance and splendid physique—it was suggested by several impersonations in pageants and plays that he was about six feet in height—and (2) that although there were technical irregularities from a political point of view in his attacks on the Spaniards—irregularities not unknown to us in more recent colonial annals—there was never anything base or reprehensible about his actions: in fact, in certain books for youthful readers he has been held up as an example of a well-nigh perfect hero, for British boys to imitate and unstintedly to admire.

What, however, are the conclusions, which anyone with a due regard for historical accuracy must draw from a critical examination of portraits and documents? ¹ Firstly, that in regard to his personal appearance, Drake was by no means heroic. He would seem to have been a perky-looking man of less than middle stature—say five feet six at most, though he may have been shorter—with a rather large head, very high forehead, pointed chin, and short nose, a little inclined to turn up. He had fine eyes and well-marked eyebrows, and his sandy Elizabethan beard and moustache hid as much as possible the poorness of the lower part of his face. Though stout and broad of chest, the shoulders were somewhat sloping, which detracted from his athletic appearance. His hair was probably reddish-brown; and no doubt, this, accompanied by fiery hazel eyes, redeemed his physiognomy from being commonplace, and revealed the glowing nature of a man who, whatever faults he may have possessed, was one of the great personages of history.

¹ The best and most life-like portrait of Drake is probably that said to be in the possession of the Marquis of Lothian, an engraving of which is Print No. 1900 × 12 × 31 × 33 in the British Museum Print Room. This was reproduced in 1911 by Messrs. Burroughs & Wellcome, in *Crown and Realm*.

Comparing and connoting the contemporary accounts of Drake and relying much on his recorded *ipsissima verba*, the right estimate of his character would seem to be as follows : Though apparently of little more than yeoman extraction and rustic Devonshire origin (his father, originally a farmer, became a clergyman of the Reformed Church and a Naval Chaplain), he was truly of Shakespeare's time and spirit, with an imagination, a power of language, and extensive vocabulary denoting great self-education, keen absorption and close reading of obtainable books ; of books, perhaps, in Spanish, French and Latin, as well as in English. He was fastidious in dress and in the care of his personal appearance, but not foppish ; a man of instinctively good taste as regards clothes, furniture, and surroundings. He loved music, seemed to know good music from bad, and took care even on his most venturesome voyages to be surrounded by an orchestra of fiddlers and flute-players. He was vainglorious and boastful of speech and quite unscrupulous : in politics, in finance, and in the advancement of his own ambitions. To further some dark matter of political intrigue, and no doubt to be of service to one or other of his great patrons at home, he did not hesitate to murder in a judicial manner Thomas Doughty, a high-minded scholar and gentleman, who might have been his rival. Yet this episode in Drake's wonderful voyage round the world is referred to in the recently produced play (apparently), and still more in the contemporary literature the play has inspired, in a way which seems to me disgusting, if rectitude, justice, and an elementary regard for the Christian ideal of conduct are to weigh with any of us, past or present, in our judgments of the people's actions. Doughty was obviously sent away with Drake, induced to join his expedition (and to subscribe largely to it out of his own funds) with the intention that, somehow or other, he should be got rid of, being a person for some reason disliked by the Earl of Essex and others in authority. Drake attempted to pick quarrels with Doughty and make things disagreeable for him from the very first, beginning indeed to get up a *dossier* against him before the expedition left Plymouth. Further troubles arose when Doughty was placed in charge of the Portuguese prize, piratically captured off the Cape Verde Islands. He was alleged, without any proof, to have converted some of the property in the prize to his own uses, and so was removed from command of it and put into Drake's own ship, the *Pelican*, afterwards re-named the *Golden Hinde*. Much of the mischief which subsequently arose in regard to this doomed man is said

to have originated through Francis Drake's brother, Thomas, who was a man of bad disposition and perpetually quarrelling with Doughty. The officers and crews of the expedition were not slow to take their cue from the two Drakes, and were always trying to fasten quarrels on to Doughty. A ridiculous dispute of this kind arose in connexion with a trumpeter named John Drewer. Doughty sought out Francis Drake, who was on another ship, to explain this, but was refused an interview and at once ordered to get into one of the small vessels of the fleet and continue his journey in that—the small vessel being apparently of no more than fifteen tons burden, and frequently parting company in bad weather with the rest of the convoy. It would seem, indeed, that Drake hoped the vessel containing Doughty might be engulfed in the stormy seas of the South Atlantic. As, however, it was not, Doughty was once more transferred to the Portuguese prize, where everything he did or said was twisted to his disadvantage, though at intervals Francis Drake protested that he was at heart his friend, 'as ever was Pythias to Damon.'

In Port Julian, on the coast of Patagonia, through no fault of Drake (who acted on this occasion with great valour, coolness, and presence of mind) a somewhat disastrous skirmish occurred with the natives; and Drake, although he saved the situation by his masterly behaviour, seems to have been thoroughly out of temper in consequence, and to have resolved then and there to have done with the Doughty business. Apparently he was inspired thereto by the remains of the gibbet and other memorials of the mutiny amongst Magellan's ships which had occurred at this same place in 1520. Accordingly, on his return to the *Pelican* after the fight with the Patagonians, he called Doughty to his presence from his quasi-captivity on board, raved at him in an insulting manner, and at last commanded those who were Drake's friends to bind him, saying that his life was not safe in Doughty's presence.

After Doughty had been tied up, Drake continued his insulting address, and forthwith ordered that he should be tried by a jury. Friends of Doughty protested against such a procedure, but Drake bore them down, saying that he cared nothing for the law. The jury being frightened by Drake brought in a verdict of Guilty. Doughty, asked as to what fate he preferred, did *not* say (as most of the versions have it) that he was ready to die, but on the contrary pleaded hard to be taken as far as Peru and set on shore. Drake replied that he would do this if he had any security for his own

life whilst Doughty remained on board. , An officer of good repute, (wrote Fletcher, the Chaplain on the *Pelican*) 'proffered himself as such security;' but Drake, who was resolved on Doughty's death, met this offer by saying that 'the only alternative to the immediate execution of Doughty would be to have him 'nailed close under the hatches,' whilst thereafter 'the whole expedition must return to England as a company of desperate bankrupts.' This alternative so distressed those who stood by, that they implored Drake on the contrary to put Doughty to death.

The unfortunate Doughty then for two days set his affairs in order and spent his time in prayer, distributing most of his goods amongst his friends. He asked to receive the Sacrament, and Drake, with the monstrous hypocrisy which was not rare in those times, actually proposed to accompany the man he was about to murder judicially to the Lord's Table; and further offered him the choice of the death which he would die. Doughty seems to have had some half hope that by joining with Drake in this holy rite, the latter might at the last moment be softened and spare his life. However, for form's sake, he chose beheadal as the manner of his death. Nevertheless Drake knew no mercy, and although he took the Sacrament with his victim, and afterwards feasted him at a sorry banquet, he subsequently stood by at the place of execution, when Doughty's head was severed from the neck with one blow, by an executioner armed with a kind of billhook. As soon as the head fell from the body Drake 'most despitefully' caused the head to be taken up and shown to the whole company, saying as this was done, 'Lo! this is the end of traitors.' Subsequently, for several days afterwards no one of any prominence on board seems to have been safe from his threats of judicial assassination. . . .

On the voyage to Magellan's Straits (the re-discovery and navigation of which, by the by, were not due to Drake at all, but to a clever Portuguese pilot, Silvestre or Silva, whom Drake had captured in the Cape Verde Islands and forced to accompany him) Drake lost at sea or abandoned three of his five ships; and after his emergence into the Pacific Ocean was himself forsaken by the *Elizabeth*; so that he started from the Pacific side of Magellan's Straits to complete his marvellous voyage round the world with only one ship, the *Pelican*, which he had re-named the *Golden Hinde*.¹

¹ Out of gratitude to his principal patron, Sir Christopher Hatton, whose crest apparently was a golden hind.

Many of the episodes of piracy which followed subsequently, as he sailed northwards up the western coasts of the New World till he reached (presumably) San Francisco, can only be described as indefensible, even for the age in which Drake lived. Yet an honest criticism of his conduct must set off against his robbery of Spanish towns, ships, and merchants, the fact that in regard to the persons of Spaniards he was not needlessly cruel, and usually gave liberty to all his captives and even something to live on after he had taken all their wealth from them. His attitude towards women was invariably above reproach and he enforced similar behaviour on his men.

On several occasions by his forbearing attitude and a certain nobility of disposition he avoided wars with the American peoples, sympathising with them, as he did, most keenly, for the way in which they had been maltreated by the Spaniards. He was certainly one of the founders of the British Empire and of the United States, by the way in which he pricked the Spanish bubble; showing to Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Dutchmen alike the hollowness of the Spanish pretensions to a monopoly of the New World, and the weakness of the defence of this monopoly. But in presenting a picture of Drake, either on the stage or in the pages of a review, why should the shady episodes in his life and the defects in his character be omitted? He still remains a hero, even when truthfully depicted; and even supposing his behaviour towards Doughty was as reprehensible as it appears in the pages of Francis Fletcher's journal, we have to thank Drake for the way boldly opened into the Pacific for Englishmen and Dutchmen, for the impetus which gave us Jamaica, Honduras and Guiana, New Zealand and Australia. Above all we have him to thank (as well as Sir William Winter) for the tactics which delayed, utterly defeated and scattered the Spanish Armada; and consequently to regard him as one of the three or four notable personalities of the sixteenth century. William the Silent was another, whose genius, whose sublime defiance of precedent and privilege, saved the west of Europe from the intolerable tyranny of the Spanish Habsburgs.

Yet why in the case of Drake, of Raleigh, Mary Queen of Scots, the Young Pretender; and of people nearer our own day—Gordon, Abraham Lincoln, Livingstone, Queen Victoria—is it always sought to depict them in the heroic mould and temper, whether they were so completely or not, or whether the element of greatness in them, as displayed in disposition or

in appearance, predominated always or was sometimes obscured ? Does not this falsifying of history in the long run create an utter distrust of what should otherwise be the most inspiring of the arts—in sculpture, painting, and literature—the re-creating of the Past ? For nearly fifty years of Queen Victoria's reign the official limner, the wood block draughtsman, the obsequious sculptor or the cartoonist was obliged to represent her Majesty in books, on coins, on canvas or in statue or bust as a lovely young girl, or a matron of large size and over-ripe beauty. I remember with what a shock came to me Linley Sambourne's realistic drawing of the Queen's face in a full-page cartoon for *Punch* for the opening of the Fisheries Exhibition in the middle eighties. In those days photographs of Queen Victoria were not commonly seen in shop windows, or were carefully stippled, characterless presentments. Sambourne had the courage to draw the Queen's face with extraordinary fidelity and justness of line. One saw here no vapid matron of placid comeliness, but a sad, far-seeing hard-worked woman of the world, a Ruler, even in small things an autocrat ; a human being of strong prejudices, jealousies and dogmatisms ; yet a personality so strong, so influential, that the student of character would have turned to look at such a face more than once in an omnibus, a church, or a shop, even though it were but the face of a short, sturdy widow-woman, plainly dressed, and of no social importance. Though at first this bold departure in the pages of *Punch*—so utterly unlike the work of Tenniel or Leech—was regarded as slightly disloyal, the desire to realise Queen Victoria as she really was gained ground ; and henceforth—even (imperfectly) on the coinage—truthful representations of her supplanted the intolerably false and vulgar portraits of the sixties and seventies. With this abandonment of the Madame Tussaud's ideal grew rapidly an appreciation of the Queen's real character and worth which made the loyalty of the last fourteen years of her reign a very strong factor in British Imperial politics.

Yet in the Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace, and in several other new representations of Queen Victoria in stone or marble, she is portrayed—not, it is true, as a draped Venus, but equally falsely—as an Amazon or a powerful giantess, with the muscular arms and shoulders of a professional strong woman : a physical development needed, however, if she is to wield the mighty two-handed sword placed in her hands or laid across her knees.

We are equally reticent or idealistic in regard to our great contemporaries. Most of us, who derive our impressions of public men from newspapers only, are unaware of some defect in speech, some flaw in aspect or manners which the Press is too gentlemanly to mention, which will certainly not be recorded in the official memoir and will consequently be regarded as a scurrilous libel by serious historians as yet unborn, who may find it alluded to in the pages of a Creevy. The morganatic marriage of the widowed prince; the exasperating lisp or stutter of the statesman; the refreshing and timely flippancy of the cardinal; the fact that a great Lady Bountiful was heartless to her housemaid; or that a potent philanthropist jilted his cousin somewhat meanly when there crossed his orbit the heiress who made his after philanthropy possible: find no place in 'Who's Who,' in character sketches of parliamentary correspondents, the London Letter of the *Westminster Gazette*, or even the pages of *Truth*. Such episodes or traits—and those cited, I need hardly say, are entirely supposititious—will almost certainly be absent from the biographical notice or the Standard Life; and consequently the future students of the time we live in will wonder *how* So-and-so could have had enemies and *why* the politics of Mr. Blank and the ministrations of Lady X did not meet with world-wide acceptance.

Of course there is the opposite effect of inaccuracy, inadequacy or falsehood in historical portraiture: the leaving of an unfairly bad impression which damns a notability for all time. Tiberius Cæsar may not have been in any way the disgusting libertine depicted in the hearsay anecdotes of Suetonius, who wrote about him seventy years after his death. The Borgias may have been unfortunate in their biographers. Sir Clements Markham has, in a recently published historical study, shown with much force how the first Tudor King poisoned the wells of knowledge concerning the real character and deeds of the last Plantagenet, Richard III. Did Timur the Tartar *really* tread into pulp beneath his horse's hoofs a thousand infants selected from a captured Persian city, or only accidentally ride over *one* sprawling baby, abandoned by a mother in her flight? Neither Herod the Great nor his two sons who succeeded him ordered any Slaughter of the Innocents, an episode which has long since been pronounced unhistorical by the leading exegetes. The bibulous, effeminate Gothic kings of Spain were probably libelled by the writers of their annals—venomous ecclesiastics whose power and wealth they curbed. It is even said now by educated Zulus

who are closely studying the orally-preserved history of Natal, that the holocausts of men and women attributed to Chaka and Dingane were gross exaggerations, by Boer and British pioneers, of disciplinary measures and bloodless cattle-raids. One may well ask with Pontius Pilate: 'What is truth?' —Pilate, who after ten years of chequered administration of Judaea probably subsided into a tranquil old age in the delightful valley of the Rhone; and did *not* commit suicide either in the Tiber or the Lake of Lucerne, or meet with any other of the doleful experiences tacked on to his real existence in history by the writers of apocryphal gospels or mediæval legends.

It would however seem from a review of the types of historical novel which take with the reading public and consequently please the average publisher; of the class of historical play passed by the Censor and repaying the cost of staging; the pageant that satisfies; the Earl's Court Exhibition which excels in gate money; and the memorial statuary acceptable to the authorities: that the British people, as a whole, care nothing for historical accuracy or for strict justice towards the dead.

A VANISHED HUMORIST.

BY W. PETT RIDGE.

HE began to reign in eighteen hundred and twenty-nine (Duke of Wellington, Prime Minister at the time ; Mr. Robert Peel, Home Secretary) and he died in nineteen hundred and twelve. For some time previously he had been wasting away ; the actual cause of his departure was petrol. First signs of approaching decay came about ten years ago, and, from that time onward, experts prophesied that he could not last much longer, but he held gallantly to the reins, saying of newly invented competitors that they could not possibly last, and always, I do believe, supporting himself with the hope that they represented little more than a temporary fancy. In the early stages, these rivals often broke down and were compelled to discharge their passengers, upon which it was his pleasing habit to flick at the stopped conveyance with his whip, and to make the inquiry ' Any old iron to-day ? ' In the same mood, he would ask of the heated mechanics who were endeavouring to put the motor omnibus in running order whether they had acquired the freehold of the land upon which it stood, or held it only on lease. These gratifying incidents lessened in number, and to-day their drivers are kings of the London streets, and he has almost gone from sight. It may be worth while to speak about him whilst he remains in our memory.

His early days were probably the happiest. Then, outside seats ran the length of the omnibus and were called knife-boards : there were places for travellers on either side of him, and the fact that ascent was made either by perilous upright ladder at the back, or by strap which he offered at the front, meant that his patrons belonged exclusively to his own sex, and conversation could be free, unfettered and easy. He trussed himself to the seat he occupied, wore voluminous wraps and overcoats, and a silk hat that had endured the trial of all sorts of weather. Folk patronised him regularly ; the eight-thirty omnibus from Brixton (say) to the Bank rarely changed, so far as passengers were concerned, excepting when holiday or illness came ; the driver knew them and they knew the driver. He furnished, at this time, John Leech with subjects for his happiest sketches ; later, Charles Keene often took

him for a model. He made (by arrangement with the conductor) a fair income that enabled him to meet the world on equal terms, and although he occasionally called men 'Sir' he never thought of them as 'Sir,' and this independence he preserved to the end. He could do many things at one and the same moment; chat with passengers near, light a pipe, chaff other drivers, give mystic signs with the whip to acquaintances, and conduct his two horses and his omnibus through the crowded traffic. Now and again—but rarely—he came into opposition with the police, and argument ensued between box-seat and roadway. A 'bus driver was once kept on the east side of Oxford Circus, for a longer time than he thought necessary, by a constable who had not been lucky in the selection of features. The driver made no protest; but when the signal was at last given for him to proceed, he leaned down and spoke to the policeman.

'You never sent me that photygraph! he said, reproachfully.

Comfort was not then made the subject of study as it is now; straw littered the floor inside the conveyance, passengers entering were shot along as though they were sacks of corn; the ascent of the outside traveller was a rehearsal for Alpine climbing. Nor was speed reckoned of any importance. A pull up at Marble Arch meant that the conductor stepped off his monkey-board and came along to have a leisurely chat with his colleague, a talk about old times and the friends that were; occasionally, a discussion of a strained nature on some topic that threatened to sever friendship. Contrary weather always brought a grievance on which they could exchange sympathy.

'How do you like it?' inquired a conductor, in the blinding rain, of his driver.

'I wish I was in 'Eaven!'

'I wish I was in a pub,' declared the conductor.

'Yes!' said the driver, bitterly. 'You always want the best of everything!'

A great change came when the steps were altered, and made convenient, for this brought women folk to the outside seats: from that moment the driver began to pay more attention to his personal appearance; from that hour dated the fashion of wearing a flower in his button-hole. The knife-boards went, and in '81 garden seats were placed facing the route; places beside the driver were abolished, and the conductor learned to call female passengers by the short title of 'Lady.' Looking back, it seems to me that the

driver suddenly became young. He wore his hat at an angle, he behaved with greater propriety in any trying circumstances. I can see him now, with four animated eager girls on the front seats, all leaning forward, and talking to him, and he so dexterously sharing his replies that no jealousy was created. With the advent of fair passengers came, however, a curiosity in regard to surroundings, an appetite for knowledge that must sometimes have tried the patience of the driver. Two American ladies took seats outside an omnibus at Trafalgar Square prepared to journey north. They fired questions: why the fountains were playing, the name of the church, particulars concerning the statues.

'Look here, ladies!' said the driver, starting his horses up the hill. 'That's the monument to Nelson on the left, St. Martin's Church is 'ere on the right, further on we pass the Garrick and Wyndham's, the back entrance to the Alhambra, and the Hippodrome; a bit 'igher up, if all goes well, the Palace, further on we reach the Oxford, and the Horseshoe. Half-way up Tott'nham Court Road, if Providence is good to us, we shall see Whitfield's Tabernacle, and not much then till we get to the Cobden Statue. 'Igher up still, the Britannia, and eventually the Adelaide, where we stop, and go no further. And,' with a flick of the whip, 'this is the 'bus, them's the 'orses, and I'm the poor blooming driver, and now you know pretty nigh as much about it all, as what I do!'

It was a conductor, also harassed, who came up once to announce, 'Westminster Abbey' (the Londoner, economising in every other word, gives an extra syllable to this first word: it probably makes it easier to pronounce). 'Who wants Westminster Abbey?'

'I do!' answered a lady passenger, without moving.

'Well,' protested the conductor, 'you'll really have to come down for it. I can't very well bring it up to you!'

Another change took place in '91 that checked the driver's gaiety, modified the cheerfulness of his outlook. The proprietors had always been satisfied if a certain amount, representing takings, was paid in for each journey. It occurred to an alert mind in authority that the system lacked the best elements of true business, and tickets, and punching, and inspectors (otherwise jumpers) were on a Sunday in May introduced. There ensued, on the next Sunday, a strike;¹ and, for a while, London walked instead of being carried, declaring itself much improved in health in consequence. All the

¹ A friend of mine, now a time-keeper, tells me he was the only driver who, that day, made a complete journey—Putney to Liverpool Street.

same, when the strike ended, and the employers had their way in regard to procedure, and the man in front had to be content with a fixed salary of seven-and-six a day, and conductors accepted six shillings a day, London promptly gave up the delights of physical exercise, and clambered on the omnibus again. The driver, after this incident, was never quite the same man; the conductor—formerly one showing extraordinary industry to obtain patrons, going to the point of seizing unwilling travellers bodily, and forcing them to enter the conveyance—became indifferent, and only at rare intervals left his foot-board.

It would not be fair to the driver to debit him with all the stories asserted to be his: many writers, who take London for their field, have found it easy to make up incidents and father them upon him. I myself, some years ago, wrote in a sketch an imaginary conversation between a London youth and a country cousin, travelling from Victoria to the Mansion House and the town lad pointing out, with persistent inaccuracy, the special sights; the story is well known now, and the only point about it is that when, on going up Ludgate Hill, the girl asked who the statue of a lady in front of the Cathedral was supposed to be, and the youth admitted ignorance, the driver turned, and speaking for the first time, said, encouragingly, 'Come, come, sir! Don't lose 'eart. Tell her it's Marie Lloyd!' The singular thing about this invented story is that twice recently it has been observed that public celebrities, interviewed, and asked to furnish some diverting occurrence of their career, have stated that they witnessed this event. One can but assume that coincidence has a greater length of arm than the critics of fiction are prepared to allow. Also, I think I know who made up the well-known story of the conductor who irritated the driver of another conveyance beyond all expression by dangling a piece of string: you know the anecdote, and the explanation to the curious passenger, 'His father was 'ung this morning.' Some day, a responsible firm in Moorgate Street will go through all the records, and decide which of the stories are to be placed to the account of the driver and conductor.

Some of his swiftest retorts have never been printed, and never can be printed. It was a personal form of humour, and he made no distinction, in attacking, between the defects in appearance that Nature had given to his opponent, and those which the opponent had made and encouraged. Sight of a red nose gave him an excuse for inquiring, with the air of one who really wanted to

know, whether the fire-engines had been sent for ; prominent teeth furnished the opportunity of making reference to the rules that concerned muzzling ; any want of dexterity on the part of other drivers aroused his bitterest criticism. At Hyde Park corner, a brougham and a pair of greys were being conducted, with some difficulty, across the road.

'Hullo, gardener !' said the omnibus driver, leaning down kindly. 'Coachman ill again ?'

He could be impressive when he thought it necessary. It was a driver who once gave me special and exclusive information concerning the Royal Family. (I afterwards found it lacked the element of truth.)

'Mind you,' he said, behind his hand, 'you must treat this what I'm telling you as strictly *infra dig.* What I mean to say is, it mustn't go any further !'

The driver's character for repartee was higher than it deserved : the fact that he constantly encountered crises of a precisely similar nature to which the same verbal comments could be applied was overlooked. Both he and the conductor were eminent legal advisers ; never better pleased than when some nice point was submitted ; always ready to give counsel's opinion : I shiver to think of what happened in the cases where their advice was followed. The laws regarding landlord and tenant had for them no secrets.

'You sue him,' they would generally decide, 'that's all you've got to do. Or else lock him up. Failing that, push his face in !'

In a lesser degree they were medical advisers, and political experts ; at times of trouble abroad they had plans which never reached the folk at the War Office. I remember during the time of the South African War a driver of a Favorite omnibus had a wonderful scheme for cornering General de Wet ; and I recollect that when peace was declared, he assured me that if he had been in charge of the British troops the war would not have lasted five minutes. This view was announced in Chancery Lane ; in Gray's Inn Road he seemed to fear he had understated the length of time, for he turned and said, 'Well, certainly not more than half a hower !'

In politics, he was a Conservative. I recollect one (a Royal Blue) who had a comprehensive plan that, he admitted, would require careful working out ; it consisted in shipping all the prominent members of the Liberal party on a man-of-war, taking

them well out to sea, and then drowning the lot. The idea was to make it appear nothing more than a regrettable accident, and the inventor assured me it would be an easy matter to square the coroner.

I have met, on the box, the accent of nearly every county in England: mainly, I think, the occupant came from the West. When he happened to be a Londoner, the explanation of his work was—'My father was a driver, and so likewise was his father before him!' I have often wondered how long a new man had to serve his apprenticeship in repartee ere he found himself able to bear himself, in any swift discussion, with honour and success; those not specially gifted probably chose the quickest minds on the road for models, and constant practice brought something like perfection. The learning of nicknames would be the first step; these, after the preliminary stages, seldom gave offence. Many of the drivers were called *Scotty*, which meant that they came from anywhere north of *Muswell Hill*; a fair-haired driver was, of course, referred to as *Ginger*; anyone less than five-feet-six in height was referred to as *Tich*; a rubicund driver with white hair of my acquaintance was called *Strawberry and Cream*. Also, I have heard inquiries made concerning the whereabouts of *Kitchener*, and *Tommy Lipton*, and *Rothschild*, and *Dan Leno*, and the folk thus referred to were all drivers, and not the distinguished people who had a right to the names.

The driver's most considerable grievance came when a conductor of the omnibus in front declined to give the signal to move, or when the driver of the omnibus behind him protested against delay. In these disputes the driver's colleague supported him manfully. Other drivers might commit error, but the conductor's own driver could do no wrong, and for this fidelity he expected compensation, when, opportunity given, he came up to describe to the holder of the reins some stirring incident that had occurred inside the conveyance, to ask for sympathy in regard to a comment made, at home, by the conductor's sister-in-law, or to call attention to a piece of news conveyed by placard. The driver was not a great reader; he trusted to passengers to furnish him with details of current events. 'What do they think they're playing about at now, in Parliament, sir?' would be the question to someone possessing a newspaper, and particulars were at once given. He backed horses, but even here there was no necessity to purchase an afternoon or evening journal; a call to some newsboy and a question

concerning the three-thirty race brought prompt information—the paper-seller honoured and pleased to be of service to a great man.

For the rest, he was good-hearted, easily touched when an appeal was made for some colleague in distress, giving up many a spare evening to attending a Grand Benefit Concert in aid of a widow and children; handing over, with readiness, his threepence when a wreath was required. He had all a Londoner's undisguised interest in funerals. A driver once told me of a ceremony at Old Ford that he had attended; the occasion was the interment of his wife's uncle, a man of some property and distinction. 'Highly impressive,' said the driver, 'and, of course, to a certain extent, solemn. There was one moment around the grave-side when you couldn't 'ear a sound. Not a single, solitary sound. Nothing but sniffs!' I know that his hat always went off when an undertaker's procession passed, and if the coffin was a small one, he remarked, 'Poor little kiddy. He ain't had much of an innings!'

It is impossible to say, generally, what will become of the horsed omnibus driver. If young, he has already joined the mechanics who sit alone at the front of the large new conveyances, fully engaged, with strained eyes, in the task of steering through London streets, snatching an opportunity for putting on the pace, sounding the horn when necessary, and keeping an anxious glance on the sloping mirror which reflects the entrance; there is no time or opportunity for exchange of chaff, and he is, in this situation, the most solitary man in town. If of middle age, he has possibly gone back to the country. But the elderly driver, accustomed to horses, and nothing but horses, aware of the extent of work to be obtained from them, and so alert to their tricks of manner that he was able to anticipate them—he, I fear, sits at home, forced to listen to the criticism of relatives, himself bewailing the unfortunate end of his career, and sometimes dreaming of old journeys, and going over every inch of the ground from Liverpool Street to Kilburn.

Meanwhile, you can go by motor omnibus from Charing Cross to Edgware (Middlesex) for fivepence-halfpenny.

THE MANŒUVRES FROM THE WAYSIDE.

*' Roulez tambours ! pour couvrir la frontière
Roulez tambours ! Roulez tambours ! '*

THE great war in East Anglia has passed into the company of the things that have been, and all that there is to say about it from a military point of view has been said by all the great military writers of the great London dailies. War and rumours of war, march and countermarch, aeroplanes and ammunition columns, leaders and their limitations, have all served to deck the phrases of those who write where angels fear to tread. The true conception of manœuvres is not as of a game which players play one with another, but the consummation of the yearly training, in which all are practising for the deadly game of war. To assemble, camp, march and manœuvre that complicated machine, a modern army, is an art that practice can alone make possible ; practice with the whole, after careful trial and due approbation of the component parts before the machine has assembled. We have seen two of our war commanders using all the wits that they have developed and the machines they have perfected, to accustom themselves to do their best by the nation in the day of trial. The manœuvres that have just concluded are not of the nature of a football match, where the names of the players may be bandied among the crowd, or a player derided for missing the kick in goal. They are of the nature of a service, to be listened to with due reverence while the leaders do their best, for the sake of what may be before them, to exercise themselves and their men to the best advantage.

We have seen two of the most highly trained and war-experienced generals at work with the best troops ever assembled in England in peace time, and we should be thankful that we possess the leaders and the troops, comparatively few though they be.

The theme of the war being a thrice-told tale, as also the lessons that appertain thereto, from the comfort of the travelling cooker to the horror and indecency of being overlooked by an aeroplane, we may perhaps turn with some profit to the things that happen by the way : the soldiery and their humours, the crowd by the hedge-row side, and the lass that loved a khaki lad. The scene of the war is laid in that fine part of fair England that has known so much

of the come and go of the Isles. A great Roman centre, with roads that stand to this day, some almost as the Romans left them. Ermine Street, and The Icknield Way, with the *Via Devana*, and the Great North Road, are in themselves names to conjure with, and to see them run in grass as they do in parts, free of macadam and the tar-barrel, is to see them as they were when the legions marched the land at the legions' pace, 'twenty-four miles in eight hours, neither more nor less.' As you see the roads that were there even before the Romans, you will also see the great ditches dug to keep out the Dane when the Roman sword no longer held the world in order. Norman and Saxon and Dane are we, but the blending has been a painful process, and the old breed that Mr. Borden has just rediscovered has been forged on anvils hot with pain.

So the good broad land that saw the pain and anguish, and saw also the final struggles of Hereward the Last of the English, and is like, some say, to see once again the Jutes and Angles come, is no bad site and scene for grand manœuvres. If you rode or marched or motored through Cambridge and Norfolk, especially that Sunday just before the period of war opened, you would have seen all the world with his wife and daughter out to see the soldiers, the soldiers that used to be thought so wicked and are now coming to their own in the esteem of those they guard. The countryside did not seem the worse for the bad harvest, however so badly the sun may have shone or the rain rained. Every one in their best, and every lad, and every lass too for the matter of that, had a bicycle. Prosperity seemed written across every village, and the cottages by the wayside echoed the same again. Methwold and Brandon and Thetford, Potton, Horseheath, Hitchin, Royston, and all the other small towns and villages, all agog at the soldiery. It was wise Francis Bacon who said that soldiers are given to love as they are to wine, and opined that it was part of the law of nature that peril should be paid by pleasures. However that may be, there was plenty of show, if not of love, of admiration, for the fair of all grades and classes came to see the soldiers, and kissed their hands and waved their handkerchiefs, as ladies should. For it is a goodly sight to see five hundred young lads swinging through a village to one man's command, with a lilt that shows youth and strength and high temper. It is good for the village and the rectory and squire's household to see great batteries of artillery file along with their teams of six fine horses: horses that

should shame the countryside into leaving their motors and once again living as the English ought, with horses and not eight-day clocks in their stable. It is good too for the men and women of the small towns to see what a fit cavalry regiment means and looks like, and to feel that khaki and mud in their right places look as well and convey more sense of power than the broadcloth and polish of the grocer's military calendar. So as guns and more guns tumbled out of the trains and marched away to the North Road, and battalion after battalion swung after them, people began to think that war in earnest had come among them, and that after all the British Army was not all on paper.

In stately solemn Cambridge the army was represented by two divergent components. A Territorial brigade of infantry and another of yeomanry, with some artillery, had been training there, and had been entrenching a position outside the town on the Gog-Magog hills to protect it from the invaders. Their camps were in and near the town. The directing staff also were quartered in the various hotels, and generals pervaded the quiet streets followed by their orderlies. All old military memories sprang to life, and everyone who had any military connexion proceeded to revive it. The butcher clicked his heels and carried his steel as a general passed, and the military salute was eagerly tendered by those who in more normal times, when learning held its wonted sway, would not have boasted a quondam connexion with the soldiery. But the scarlet fever ran riot, and no doubt in their chambers, dons of the University were trying to tilt their mortar-boards like lancer caps.

It were well to tarry awhile with lasses in the village high street, as the troops file by, and listen to the words that fall. A string of quick-firing artillery is passing, and a fairy voice from the vicarage garden says, 'How do they shoot the cannon?' 'Oh, I know,' says another; 'they unhook them off those carriages and turn the spout round towards the enemy. Cousin Jack's in the Artillery, you know.' 'Oh! look at that dear horse with nice fat legs!' Out on the pavements the maids were wildly excited: 'They do say as how one o' they Scotch regiments is coming presently.' 'Look, 'ere comes the lancers!' However, it was only a corporal of the Army Service Corps with a camp colour, but that did not matter; it was war, red war; and then presently, just as Jane had prophesied, a whole barbarian regiment did come along, with pipes a-skirling and kilts a-swinging. And from all the outlying lanes hurried the populace to see the soldiery; for as the loadstone points to the

northwards so the girls run to the soldiers, and for the matter of that most other folks too. A regiment and a band passing down the street brings the clerk and the man of business from his office as well as cook from the kitchen. Every lad for a brief half-hour intends to '*porter le flingot*' and go for a soldier, just as they do in *La Belle France* when the *tambours* roll, or used to before every one must serve his time lest worse befall.

In a field beyond the village a brigade of howitzer field artillery was going into bivouac, much to the interest of the neighbourhood. The vixen howitzer catches the fancy even more than the long eighteens of the quick-firing batteries. There is an air of peace based on conscious strength in the weapon so that poets even have written of it—

When the squat and sullen howitzer is quiet
 And his diet
 Of cordite and of lyddite is at rest
 In the nest
 Of the limber, while the gunners and the drivers come and go
 To and fro.

and so forth, just as if the good Mr. Browning had written about them, which of course he didn't. So the populace poked about, while the limber gunners cleaned the guns, and the drivers hand-rubbed the horses and the dinners simmered in the cookers, and, to quote Uncle Remus, 'De gals make a great 'miration, an-d laff and giggle same like gals duz dese days.' And while all the country is opening its doors to the troops, the officer finds some special reception for him too. Brighteyes over the rectory gate offers tea on the lawn by the old sundial, with its happy motto of *Carpe diem*. And perhaps the maiden aunt of Brighteyes asks you in, in a faded voice that reminds you of the old-world England you knew as a boy. You sit and listen to the drowsy splash of the fountain, and dream of other days, till the insistent notes of the stable-call come as a horror and an offence. It is a beautiful call for all that, and the barrack doggerel is not unfitting—

Go to your stable,
 And see if you're able,
 To give your horses some hay-y-y
 And some corn.

Every call has its barrack refrain, which serves to make it remembered. The old *réveillé* began in a characteristic way, which hardly does justice however to its beautiful long-drawn notes, spun out

in the tense crisp winter dawn, bidding stablemen to muck-out the stables :—

Get . . up . . and . . put . . your . . high- . . lows . . on
The commissary's waiting for the dung.

So the insistent call dragged you away from the quiet rectory lawn and from Brighteyes and the gentle aunt, and you stroll up the village to your bivouac and the horse lines. *En route* you may find your quartermaster-sergeant talking to the lady of the inn, he like the immortal Captain Wattle, being all for love and a little for the bottle. And such like and so forth up and down the length and breadth of Cambridgeshire. Then, since an army crawls on its stomach, and bayonets are of little use without beef, away behind the marching columns you will see the 'trains,' the wagons full of supplies, with little of the pomp and circumstance of war about them. Behind the trains again, working up from railheads come the columns of mechanical tractors, chunking steam lorries and the like. The long columns of transport that pass through the villages, however, are of interest in their way, with their pontoons and ambulances leading. The transport driver, especially when a civilian, is not a very inspiring person, especially after a day or so of the English rain that never tires. We may perhaps sympathise with the individual who, uncheered by the information that the camp was to be at the top of the R in Royston, on the map, said he should have thought it was at the bottom of the Y in B—y. This has something in it akin to that other story, of the staff officer in the dark calling out to a weary regiment retreating back over the Tugela, 'Are you the West Riding?' To which came back the bored answer from the ranks, 'Noa. . . We're the Buffs . . . a-walking.' The point of it all, however, is that armies include a good deal more than men with rifles and guns with horses, and that the description of a man as 'the best commissariat officer since Moses' was a very high one. To leave the supplies behind is to loose the bands of Orion, and in that great evolution of the British army the matter of supply and administration has perhaps advanced more than all the rest. In the big manœuvres that succeeded the return of the army from South Africa, these matters of the rearward services went easily, because a three years' war is a good preparation for manœuvres; but though that war is forgotten, administration is now studied as a live science. The evolution of the British army of to-day, through the ages since the Crimea, has been one of the most interesting and most heartbreaking spectacles

for those who have watched it with the eyes of knowledge. Perhaps the saddest reflection of all is that the great soldier who fought for years against a military ignorance born of the forty years of peace, and against the apathy of a nation who feared an army, is, though still with us, no longer fit to rejoice in the change that has come. Emphatically is the army of to-day a going modern concern, deficient in peace time in many details, but, so far as it goes, a highly organised and highly trained field army. Anyone except the English would have had it so a century ago; but then, the English are—well, what they are.

However, the organisation and training of to-day would have rejoiced those who preached in the wilderness a quarter of a century ago. There is a good story told of the days when modern war, and the mental demands it makes, was anathema to the army at large. The story is so old that it is now new, and may safely be told again. The immediate hero was a well-known man in his time. It happened in Ireland that a very terrible thing had come upon the garrison there. A general had come to command in Dublin who, horror of horrors! had that dreadful disqualification, a Staff College certificate. Instead of being ashamed of it, he rejoiced, and talked of war and its preparation, and whether or no Napoleon had meant to drive a wedge between the Allies on the Charleroi Chaussée, and the like. He expected officers to take some interest, and also to turn out to work in field service marching order, and all the things of that sort that to-day are no more than the accepted practice, but in those days were considered the ideas of cranks—excepting always in the Light Division, whose units packed their kits every morning for a generation after the peace, in memory of the dead master. He even insisted on having field days in marching order, with an enemy and general and special ideas thrown in. The which was also anathema.

Now commanding the Royal Horse Artillery in Dublin in those days was one famous in his way and whom for obvious reasons we will call 'Woodcock' Brown. It was 'Woodcock' Brown who, so late as the end of the seventies, had sent the assistant adjutant-general of the district a challenge because the wording of an official memorandum had annoyed him. Lord Cardigan heard of it in London town where all the clubs were enjoying the story, and telegraphed to him, 'Shoot him through the body, Woodcock'—which however he did not do, for the clock will not be put back to please the eccentric in matters of such import. Now 'Woodcock' was a very fine horse artilleryman of the type who cared for nothing

behind the splinter-bar. The plume of his busby was the admiration of the young officers, being at least three inches taller than anyone else's, and his boots were a sight to see. The sort of field day he liked included the horse artillery in their dress jackets galloping in line of batteries across the Phoenix. It may well be imagined that the new general was little to his taste, and all modern war and its theories taboo.

Very shortly after his arrival the new general devised a modern field day, with an enemy and general special ideas, and to 'Woodcock's' disgust the troops paraded in workaday clothes. They met at the rendezvous and then moved to some position of readiness while the cavalry reconnoitred. No order came for the horse artillery to go galloping to the front, and there was little of that pomp of war with which 'Woodcock' used to entertain the spectators in the Park. Presently the force moved off to the right at a slow pace, and then came to a halt again. 'Woodcock' was properly disgusted. He sat on his sixteen-two charger of imperfect manners, and sniffed. Up rode a young officer of cavalry, with all of whom 'Woodcock' was a favourite. The lad touched his cap and said, 'Excuse me, Colonel, I have been detailed to keep a narrative of to-day's operations. Can you tell me at all what is being done?' Woodcock stretched out his long boots before him in the stirrup till they glinted entirely to his satisfaction. He looked over his shoulder and saw the general and his staff close behind. 'Certainly, my boy! Certainly.' And here he raised his voice: 'This is a German manœuvre. Away in the distance yonder are the enemy; we have been marching round them, they have been watching us. We continue to march round them, they continue to watch us, till at last, my boy'—and here he raised his voice again—'at last we screw their—necks off.'

So you see it is quite within the memory of man that the army hated serious modern war training, and the mental exercise it demands. The Anglo-Saxon imagination is not very fertile, and has long found it difficult to enjoy operations which leave a certain amount to the imagination. The race has the defects of its qualities.

The good Germans know their metal. They look not for the phenomenal man, the man of destiny, but have steadily prepared a machine and a doctrine of strategy which any moderate general, trained in the right spirit and imbued with the authentic doctrine, can lead to victory. The French perhaps look to the man and the hour, and so train their leaders, some say, that they shall answer

to the call of inspiration—which is the difference between the racial characteristics. Be that as it may, the English officer is now so trained that he understands and appreciates much that is going on, and will perhaps tell you how Haig is operating so as to get a pivot of manœuvre, and that 'Jimmy' is lying doggo to get in a counter attack; that Haig says '*Enfin je les tiens ces Bleus*' and that his opponent says '*Vorwärts*,' all of which is probably totally inaccurate but shows how the Anglo-Saxon imagination has been stimulated and that something of the outline of war is known and appreciated, so that it may well be said that the soldiers of the reformation laboured not in vain.

The rough and tumble of modern soldiering is also a story that is comparatively new. At one time the soldier was treated as if of glass in peace time, so that he should break down as near as possible when suddenly put to the strain of war. Now, though young and half-fledged in England, since the fighting force is largely in the Reserve, he marches twenty or thirty miles a day with his pack, dosses in the wet grass where he halts, takes his bite from the cooker and goes on outpost for the night, and up and on in the morning, like any old rough-and-tough of the Light Division. It is your hard-hitting far-marching infantry that carry the eagles where the Empire orders them, and the British infantry now marches and bivouacs with the best. The good independent English have not yet been sufficiently taught to bow to the law of nations to admit of billeting in peace time, more's the pity, so that at manœuvres men and horses have to sleep out in the raw and the cold and the dew, to the good health of the men and the undoing of the horses. Hot stew and lashings of tea in the cookers keep the men fit, but there can be no hot bran-mashes for his Majesty's horses, and into the stables and barns of his subjects they ought to go in peace as they will do in war.

Benjamin Trovato, that famous *raconteur*, had of course something to tell on this subject of bivouacs. According to him the President of the Local Government Board, having marched and dosed with the soldiery as is his wont, in the autumn manœuvres, found himself early one morning outside the Fulbourn Lunatic Asylum. This same asylum happened to lie in the line of defence covering Cambridge, and the troops holding this line, a strong mixed brigade of all arms from the Territorial Force, had been bivouacking on their entrenched position for a couple of days. The President of the Local Government Board felt that so good an

opportunity to satisfy himself as to the conduct of a lunatic asylum was not to be missed, so he presented himself at the door. As officials were not about, he conversed with an inmate who was sweeping out a passage. He received but laconic replies, till he inquired if he was comfortable. This searching question appealed to some train of thought in the looney. 'Comfortable!' said he; 'A darned sight more comfortable than those silly fools of volunteers sleeping out in the wet grass these nights,' and there he left him. It was undoubtedly a case of 'Come inside.' The voluntary part of this particular performance had struck the lunatic as quaint, as no doubt it does those gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease and let others bear their share of home defence. So let us join in the unconscious praise of the looney.

All of which brings us naturally enough to the last day of war, when the armies had marched and concentrated and the commanders had strained their wits, and each and all stood committed to the combat, for weal or for woe. 'D. H.' had concentrated his army on what seemed to him the important flank and, with a division endeavouring to turn his adversaries' flank, was advancing for a pivot of manœuvre. 'Jimmy,' equally versed in the methods of *grande guerre* (with both r's rolling), had no flank, but a concentrated division waiting for some chance to give him the better grip. But thanks to the all-pervading aeroplane, both commanders knew enough of the other's moves to be able to bring every available soldier on to the field, and so, as both sides were more or less equal, a vast encounter battle rolled from Weston Colville in the north down through Horseheath to close on Saffron Walden in the south. On each side between twenty and thirty batteries of quick-firing artillery were making day hideous, and for mile on mile the rolling English countryside was alive with troops. Four divisions of the Expeditionary Force, four cavalry brigades and a strong Territorial detachment had been brought into action. Hazel copse and wattle, barn and willow bank, and every underfeature, was full of crawling creeping khaki figures. The missing Blue division, that is to say the division whose whereabouts are said to have been unknown to the Red commander for a time, had now deployed into the open, and had ceased, as its own commander had said, to cover itself with grass and make a noise like a mushroom to mystify the aeroplanes. It had joined battle with that stealing turning Red division, and had formed a pivot of manœuvre for both commanders. Bicycle and motor and Shank's-mare had now brought the public to crowd

the roads so far as the police would let them, something perhaps as the public had thronged the roads between Brussels and Mont St. Jean—the travelling gent. and a sadder crowd, the wives of those holding up Napoleon, and those who like the Widow Malone still believed themselves such. Just such a crowd perhaps, without the sadness. Anyway, they were all there, agog to see the loud artillery, and to ask every sort of question after their kind. The old folk were out too in their wheel chairs, and to them his Majesty was the occasion. 'Shall we see the King? Will he come this way?' was the unending question. Here and there some old soldier would find himself on the royal route and be made thrice happy by his Majesty stopping to talk, after the kindly manner that he wears so well. Here some fair American had taken possession of a brigade headquarters, and was telling the commander that she thought the machine gun just too cunning, and wanted to know if 'pop' might have a ride on a gun limber, which as a matter of fact was the last thing 'pop' wanted. 'Pop,' however had lots to say, and had been to the Durbar at Delhi, so could talk of 'Your coloured troops,' and was a very informing man, and talked of the camaraderie that should exist between people who had the same institutions, and spoke the same language. The world to him apparently consisted of Britishers, Dutchmen and Dagoes, outside the Americans.

Up near Horseheath a small party of pressmen was discussing the situation, and Mr. Mowbray Fry, wearing the ribbons of seventeen war medals, was, as the bills had it, showing how a war artist does his work under fire. Another was explaining to an umpire that in his judgment the battle was won at 2.45 P.M. *precisely*, and as he had been a Roosevelt Roughrider in our 'war with the dagoes' no doubt he knew. The men of war were all there, but it was in their night billets in Cambridge that they were to have been heard at their best, wars and rumours of wars, with that delightful 'trouble-in-the-Balkans' tinge that is so bohemian and so fascinating. They all knew exactly at what hour one or other of the commanders had been successful, though their opinions differed, like those of many other observers, for with a battle raging over ten miles of close English ridge-and-furrow country, even at manœuvres it is not easy to know what was the sum total of affairs. In war time it would have taken a generation before the historians could have settled what actually did happen to their liking, when the desks of the dead had given up their papers.

Here and there at special corners would ride by selected parties of the foreign military attachés, handsomely accoutred, science in a Pikelhaube and the like, the French military mission taking notes with an appreciative eye as brothers-in-arms should.

Then as along the miles of front the troops become closer involved, and subordinate commanders were collecting their local reserves for final assault and counter attack, the signal was made for cessation of hostilities just as the Territorial Force after a hard march from Cambridge arrived to be thrown into the fight in the hope of turning the scale. When battle is joined at manœuvres and the lines and batteries are chock-a-block, there is little more to be learnt. A false situation involving disentanglement, and a fresh start, is always possible to order, but the supply of moral petrol sufficient to carry such renewed operations through with interest, is not within the control of the Directing Staff. So it is that with the evening of the main battle wise Directors usually close the operations. Just as the sun was setting behind the invaders, the bugles calling off the tired soldiery ranged up and down the line, and in a very short time the troops were swinging home to their allotted bivouacs. There were presumably many points of detail which the General Staff were specially studying during the operations in the search for a practical solution, no doubt with success. As regards aeroplanes, of which the writers of the Press expect such wonders, it is perhaps wise to remind ourselves, that when you have as much information as can be obtained by the opposing commanders exchanging copies of their intentions, the battle has still to be fought and won—or lost—as of old.

With the close of the manœuvres came a scene dramatic and significant in its setting, in some sense a pageant of Empire and memorable to all who took part, or at any rate to all with the gift of imagination. After manœuvres it is the rule to assemble a conference at which the opposing commanders narrate their plans and actions, and the Director of Manœuvres comments on the plans of the leaders and their execution. On this occasion however the conference, called in the language of the camps the 'Pow-wow,' was something out of the ordinary. Not only did his Majesty preside in person, with his Secretary of State and his Army Council around him, but the conference was held in the great hall of Trinity, in the presence of the Master and many of the dons of the University, with many a distinguished visitor as well. Let

us look on the scene that blended the learning of the student with the men of the camps and the field.

Under the portrait of good bluff King Hal, on the dais at the top of the hall, sat his Majesty, with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir John French, the Secretary of State for War, and the other counsellors, and behind them the lesser officers of the *haute direction*. Below on the long tables sat facing each other, the Blue and Red commanders, each with their staffs, their subordinate commanders, and the senior officers of their regiments. Behind the respective armies sat their umpires each to each. In the transepts (since the hall is cruciform) sat separate groups. In the western chairs the Inspector-Generals of the Home and Oversea Forces, with their inspectors, and in the east the distinguished visitors. These included the Chiefs of the Oversea sections of the Imperial General Staff, or their representatives, war ministers of the Dominions, and the like. Among them one Brigadier-General-of-Oversea-Forces Beyers, late of the army of the South African Republic, and now wearing the once hostile khaki, a striking example of the way of the English. It is one thing to ride willy-nilly in chains at the conqueror's triumph, it is another thing to be of your own free will an honoured member of a vast partnership, and the commander of an Imperial cohort. The representatives of the sister service sat also in the eastern recess, as also the members of the French military mission. The 'grizzled drafts of years gone by' sat there also, in the persons of the field-m Marshals, sitting as the past masters sit, in silent judgment, and as a living example to the brethren, and who, past 'the surge and thunder of the Odyssey,' rest from their labours.

Close by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff sat also two other great chiefs at the royal table, the Master of Trinity and the Master of King's, who with the dons below listened to the *artium magister* of another craft.

To see the King sitting at the head of one of the biggest and certainly the best equipped and best trained English armies ever paraded, with our immediate war leaders, and their war staffs, at a period in our existence when war, real serious war on land, is once more within the bounds of possibilities, is to have seen a more than memorable sight. Set in the great hall of Trinity, the frame is worthy of the picture. Looking down the hall at the tables, on the hard-bitten earnest faces, straight with the straightness of the English, who could but be content that all is well with England?

Norman and Saxon and Dane and Celtic, it was an interesting by-thought to those who were able, to trace from face and form those who threw back clean to the original stock, as the Abbé Mendel would have it. Here the small dark Pict, the dead spit of the painted people; here the tall fair figure with flowing tawny moustache that spoke clearly of Saxon strain, and would have gladdened the heart of a Ouida heroine; behind him some round head, a clear throw-back to a barrow folk, some chief who lies to this day on the down with his kin around him. Tall, dark, and high-browed from the Celt, taller still and fair from the Dane and the Norseman, fair and thickset from Hereward and his Saxons, neat and clear-cut from the Norman French, such yesterday, to-day, and forever are the English, and their brethren of the North and the Isles, a d——d hard tiresome race to meddle with.

Good friends and good enemies too, as the world has known in the past, and so too perhaps thought *le Général Foch*, and Brigadier-General Beyers, and the men of the daughter nations. And what thought the King in his golden crown, as he sat and looked on 'the men of an ancient sea-born race'? Did he think of the great happy-go-lucky spirit that makes the English live to make mistakes and die to retrieve them, to whom wars and rumours of wars yet mean little, and who cannot yet see clearly the danger at their gates and how to avoid it, toil their soldiers never so seriously? *Moi, je ne sais pas, le Bon Dieu sait*; but for the King in cloth and gold on the dais and the soldier in khaki and lion-tamer boots below, there is no description so fitting as the opening lines of that allegory of Empire 'The Galley-slave':—

Oh! gallant was our galley, from her carven steering-wheel
To her figurehead of silver and her beak of hammered steel.

CASCAPLE.

THE RAIMENT OF CAPTIVITY.

NAPOLEON BOSWELL, the little gypsy, could time a flying horse to the hundredth part of a split second and be well out of the way of the strike of his heels, but he could not time a motor-car. Therefore one evening when a motor-car found him in a shady lane engaged upon shady work therein, it lifted him right into one hedge, while Cinder the lurcher rolled yelping into the other and the hare disappeared into the next field.

Poley lay still in the hedge and rapidly ran over all he had ever heard of other worlds than this, and he thought that his legs had been carried away in the motor-car. But they were not, for when at last a working portion of his understanding returned to him he discovered that he was lying in a bed of an appalling white colour with his left leg hurting him viciously. The room appeared to be full of people—all of them Gājos. But even yet Poley could not pull himself sufficiently together to lie adequately to the question thrice addressed to him—

‘What is your name, little boy, and where do you belong to?’ He could only gaze with faintly moving lips at a tall lady bending over him.

‘Stent, will you please ask him?’ said this lady, moving back from the bed. ‘You may make him understand.’ A little lean chauffeur slid respectfully into the foreground, but once at the bedside he suddenly lapsed from his good manners and shouted loud in Poley’s ear.

‘Hey! what do they call you boy, and where d’yer live?’

‘Elijah Turnbull,’ lied Poley, fertility of invention suddenly returning to him, ‘and we live in Glasgow.’ The chauffeur shook his head disapprovingly.

‘There have been some gypsies about lately, ma’am,’ he explained. ‘I saw them last night camping in Green Lane. It’s like as not he belongs to them.’

As a result of investigation in that quarter, it was not long before the pale faces of Poley Boswell’s father and mother appeared in the doorway. They were in a condition of quivering shyness and of consternation pitiable to behold, but encouraged by sundry pushes from behind on the part of the chauffeur, who followed them

closely, they were finally got into the room. Then suddenly their embarrassment gave way before the dawning horror of the situation, and Mrs. Boswell, with a faint scream, tumbled on her knees at the bedside of her son.

'Oh! my blessed Poley, my blessed little son! What in de worl' is de matter?' she wailed. 'Oh! my blessed mother, take me home,' Poley wailed back at her, and struggled fiercely to break away from his bed-clothes. But he was held down sternly and bidden to be a brave boy.

'I am so sorry, Mrs. Turnbull, about it all,' the tall lady began very softly. 'I am not so sure that it was really our fault, but there is no doubt that your son Elijah has broken his leg—and it's a rather bad break, I am afraid. The doctor tells me he cannot be moved for some time to come with safety. So you must trust us to take care of him here. He shall have everything done for him that can possibly be done, and we will take as much care of him as if he were in a hospital.'

This particular illustration of care was, however, somewhat unfortunately chosen, for it brought Mrs. Boswell on her knees again with a wail of fear. It is well known in the tents that Mrs. Boswell's great aunt Melinda had once been borne sorrowing to a hospital, and her people had never seen her face again. She died there of smallpox. But Mr. Boswell sternly rebuked his wife for her ebullition of feeling. 'Be quiet, woman,' he said. 'You've got no manners, you're that owdacious and brazen. Don't be forgetting of your civility among civil people.' Then turning towards the benefactress he explained, 'You see we cannot abear to part with our son, lady, my wife and me. Now if he could only come along with us, we——'

'That would be a most risky proceeding, my good man,' interrupted a sallow and solemn-looking man. He had previously hurt Poley's leg excruciatingly, and Poley had adjudged him a doctor and a murderer. 'Unless you want to have a cripple for your son—quite permanently incapacitated—you had better leave him here with Miss Angela Freeling. As she makes you the offer you may be sure that that is the best course of action, and you may be very thankful for the chance she holds out.'

At that Mr. and Mrs. Boswell stood and faced each other, and they exchanged a prolonged gaze, a look so long and so searching into each other's eyes that it seemed nothing less than an occult dialogue of intimate souls. Then two sharp words of Romani as

conclusion, and Napoleon the elder turned to Miss Angela Freeling with a deep and respectful obeisance. 'Wery well, lady, since you say so, so it shall be, and be sure we are wery willin' to trust with you our son, and thank you kindly for your offer. We are not onleained people what does not reckernize a high and noble offer. But it's a wery 'ard thing to part with our little boy like this—'ard to part with him like this in pain. 'E's like gold and silver to us is—is—our Elijah. You understand our feelings, lady.'

Then Mrs. Boswell suddenly leaned over Poley and spoke very rapidly to him in Romani, and what she said, being interpreted, was this—'Listen Poley, for your life, listen. Your dad 'as just got into trouble about a horse, a very big trouble, and we are going off to-night—Redford way—far and quick as ever we can go. There aint a chanst of our stopping anywhere about here outside of the prison, so you'll just have to make the best of your way to find us as soon as ever you can get yourself out of this house of foolish Gājos. Do you understand, my Poley?'

Poley understood, and the horror of it all made him jump. Instantly a sharp pain shot down his leg, the room began to swim round him, and he seemed sinking, sinking down through the white bed till he was utterly lost in a dark, silent night of unconsciousness. When he woke up his father and mother were gone, and a bottle with an unknown horrible smell was being held against his nose.

So it fell out that for a season the tents of his people no longer knew Poley Boswell, and he dwelt miserably in the house of strangers. He hated it with all his soul. He hated the whiteness of his room. He hated the whiteness of the shirt that covered his brown skin. He hated the whiteness of the cup he drank out of; for no well-regulated gypsy ever uses white china. He longed, among all this trim and dazzling whiteness, for the dark, unshapely, and well-perforated tent which in happy days sheltered his slumbers. As for the people amongst whom he had come they seemed altogether unaccountable in their ways and foolish in their minds. Their brave effort to conceal from him their disconcerting discovery of his parents' disappearance seemed the most fondly transparent piece of lying he had ever witnessed. He only wished they would out with it and save him the tedium of the daily performance of declaring, with many tears, his intention of killing himself if they didn't bring to him his father and mother. But excepting on this point of their dense foolishness he rather liked these people. There was no doubt they were kind in a clumsy, wrong-headed sort of way,

bringing him picture-books of boys at school, of boys playing cricket, of boys trundling hoops, of boys doing all manner of things outside his notion of normal boyhood. The questions put to him too! Whether he really liked living in a tent; whether he was often hungry; whether he wouldn't like to work on a farm or be a gardener, and so on, and so on, till his head ached.

Though all this sort of thing spurred him to considerable inventiveness, and he lied in reply fluently and with circumstance, yet he felt they were so like children in his hands that he was sorely tempted a score of times to give up the game, tell the truth and risk the shaming of the devil.

But one day there was a gleam of brighter things. He elicited from Miss Angela Freeling that she was fond of horses, and kept two hunters. Her carriage-horses she had parted with for a motor. Her groom was now her chauffeur. Perhaps he remembered Alfred Stent, the groom? He had carried him upstairs after the accident. Poley remembered him and cursed him low in Romani. Had he not devilishly and clumsily driven over him and broken his leg? But here, at any rate, was a link of fellowship with at least one person in the house, and it must be confessed that Poley, growing more and more homesick and longing to talk of the things he knew, waxed truthfully communicative and talked volubly of the horses that had come into his wide and varied experience of the road and the horse-fair. A bay mare in Miss Angela's stable had begun to show symptoms of strangles, and Poley ventured to shake his head over the groom's treatment, and went so far as to suggest a prescription of his own which Miss Angela Freeling wrote down on paper. This solemn recording act was impressive, and ministered to Poley's pride, but he wondered why she couldn't carry it in her head as he did.

At last came the hour of release. Poley left his horrible white bed; then his room. Finally he was given a crutch and was helped downstairs to the kitchen. At last he went out of doors. Oh! how good it was just to sniff the free fresh air of heaven again and see the wide sky overhead. His heart bounded at the sight; and that surely, coming down to him on the wind, was the smell of horses! He nosed at it luxuriously, and then away he tottered awkwardly on his crutch straight for the stable-yard. And there he found himself in the presence of Alfred Stent, who was sweeping the yard in leisurely manner. Poley looked at him in disgust. A groom, a master of horses, who had humbled himself to become a

mere engine-driver! And it was such a man, going on still in his wickedness, who had brought all this misery into Poley's life. Presently the groom raised his small person, leaned on his broom and gazed on Poley critically through one eye. 'Ello! young Gyppo . . . And where are you a-goin' a-stealing that crutch?' For which salutation Poley's hatred of the moment became a hatred for all eternity. He therefore sharpened his tongue. 'I'm only a-goin', Mr. Stent, to see to what purpose you've been druggin' that bay mare.'

Alfred Stent opened his second eye amazedly. 'Elijah Turnbull,' he growled, 'I'll trouble you to mind your own business. What do you know about the bay mare, I'd like to know?'

'There's no call to be angry, Mr. Stent,' said Poley, suddenly meek. 'I only know as she had strangles, and I jest wanted to look at her. It's so very easy a thing to cure is strangles in a healthy 'oss.'

'Well, then, the bay mare 'as gone so you can't see her. She went yesterday. To 'ear a little hedge-bottom vagabone like you talk of curing an 'orse makes me laugh.'

Certain croaking sounds in the throat of Mr. Stent testified to the intensity of the amusement that he felt, as he brought his broom into slow action again and proceeded noisily with his occupation. Poley eyed him contemplatively a while, and then he said:

'I wouldn't exactly say as you 'ad made a mistake, Mr. Stent, seeing as I don't know *all*—who you've a-parted with her to, and a lot of other things besides. There's often a deal to know about a sick 'oss.' Then he turned on his heel and hobbled slowly out of the stable-yard. Poley had only drawn a bow at a venture, but the bolt flew close enough apparently to make Mr. Stent stop his work, steady himself on the broom-handle and gaze after Poley's retreating figure with an awestruck look on his face.

Poley's recovery was rapid. He had fine recuperative powers. He healed like the tough little sapling of a hedge-thorn stock that he was, and a few days after the interview with Mr. Stent he was able to skip on his crutch at a pretty brisk pace to the drive where, early one morning, he heard the clatter of a horse being put through his paces. It was a well-built, shapely hunter by which stood Miss Angela, Alfred Stent, and a big horse dealer whom Poley knew well as a frequenter of the better-class horse-fairs. He was a man of a fiery face and a watery voice, a voice that had always offended Poley, being subtly suggestive of the dribblings of a muddy soul.

Stent was standing a little in the background of the group, so that Poley came up to his side unobserved.

'It's a better piece of 'orseflesh in every way, madam, than the bay mare,' he heard the dull gurgle of the dealer's voice. 'You may trust me, madam, when I say—in every way. It was a shockin' error I made in taking 'er off your 'ands, madam, for I'll never be able to make a saleable mare of her—not if I live to a 'undred. Tell yer, madam, I can see her bein' a dead lors to my pocket.'

'Oh, I hope not, Mr. Flammock,' Miss Angela replied deprecatingly, 'I should not like that, but I really don't think you'll find it so bad as you think. Now I *do* believe you about this chestnut. There is no doubt about his quality, and he carried me well in the paddock.'

Thus Poley learnt what had become of the bay mare. It gave him food for rapid reflection and even for conjecture. Then he proceeded swiftly to run over with some satisfaction the points of the bay mare's possible successor, till suddenly his eye rested on a feature which filled him with suspicions—a certain danger signal for which a gypsy horse dealer is always on the alert. Then the devil entered into Poley's heart. He remembered nothing but the injury he had received at the hands of his enemy standing by his side, so unconcerned and unsuspicious of danger. Poley threw away caution, and drawing closer to Alfred Stent he whispered in a very low voice, 'What are you gettin' on this deal, Alfred? Your pockets will be 'bout as heavy with sovereigns as that horse's belly is full of shot.'

The unexpected happened. It was Miss Angela who suddenly turned on Poley, and it was no longer the pleasant-mannered Miss Angela of heretofore. Her voice had become hard, and her eyes were so penetrating that he quailed before them.

'What was it you said just then, Elijah Turnbull?' she demanded.

Poley shuffled uneasily on his crutches. 'I said nothink,' he stammered.

'You are telling a lie, Elijah,' she said, and her eyes seemed to burn his soul. 'What is it you said to Stent?'

Then Poley's pluck suddenly departed, his inventive powers fled from him, and he replied: 'I said as that 'oss warn't—warn't all as he should be.'

'What's the matter with him?' Miss Angela's eyes held him still in their compelling grip, and Poley replied: 'Gone i' the wind.' Then he knew that he was a lost soul.

There was a moment's awful silence. The dealer's fiery visage glowed hot like a furnace under the bellows. Sounds came from his throat as if a thick overflow were preparing, but Miss Angela turned abruptly to the groom. 'Saddle that horse again,' she said, 'and bring me my whip.'

The ten minutes that followed, during which Miss Angela was galloping the horse round and round the meadow, were about the most uncomfortable Poley ever remembered spending in all his life.

He and the groom and the dealer stood at the stable-gates, and the groom and the dealer alternately cursed each other in low, and cursed Poley in loud, tones. Poley, ear-hardened as he was to the language of horse-fairs and roadside inns, shivered at the things which were to befall him in body and soul for his interference in 'a business which warn't his.' By the time Miss Angela Freeling had at last drawn rein and dismounted he was prospectively a blasted cinder of the under-world. Miss Angela descended at some distance from the group. She held the horse by the rein and listened carefully, then she led him straight up to the dealer.

'He is touched in the wind, Mr. Flammock,' she said quietly.

The dealer protested turgidly. 'Oh, no! madam, I'm sure, madam. Oh, dear, no. There aint no person could say that. She may be just a leetle bit weak in that point, as you might say, and as I told Alfred Stent here. No one can ever say as Jerry Flammock don't speak out straight of the bad points as well as the good points of the 'osses he sells. "Be sure," I says to Alfred Stent, "you tell the lady that if he has a weak point about him it is in the wind—but otherwise——"'

Stent's face paled. At first words failed him, then he broke out in breathless haste: 'It's a d——d lie, ma'am. He didn't tell me nothink of the sort.'

'Don't swear in my presence,' said Miss Angela, sternly; and then turning to the dealer she threw the bridle to him.

'I cannot say I like either you or your horse,' she said coldly. 'And I won't purchase. You will find that the nearest way out of the park.'

Then she turned on her heel, and Poley, thinking discretion the better part of valour, followed her closely upon his crutch. But she never turned to speak to him, and went up the steps and into the house without a word.

The curious thing was that Miss Angela never alluded to this incident of the chestnut horse again, but the next day she sent for Poley into her presence. The woman who the day before had cowed him into telling a most audacious truth had disappeared. She was once more the foolish woman of no understanding. She first broke to him with much pathos the news of his parents' disappearance. Then she gently laid before him her plans for his future, including the provision of a good situation on a farm at an early date. Poley assumed a duly broken-hearted attitude in view of the loss of his parents, and an attitude of thanksgiving at the dazzling prospect of being able to earn for himself an honest livelihood. He left her presence shedding some tears of mingled sorrow and gratitude. While she smiled happily to herself, contemplating with much inward satisfaction the paths of plenty and of righteousness into which she proposed to lead little Elijah Turnbull, who had been so providentially useful to her.

Now this new development would no doubt have become perplexing had it not been followed with a felicitous alacrity by another incident of an altogether different nature. Poley's heart bumped up into his mouth one afternoon when he saw the flutter of a hawk's 'mongin-guno' (begging apron) at the kitchen door. He approached warily and saw that it was Mrs. Linda Sherrard, a 'posh-rat' (half-breed) of his acquaintance, selling clothes-pegs. He knew better than draw near whilst she was engaged in her trafficking at the door, but he lay in ambush for her in the shrubbery.

'Lor! Poley Boswell, is that you? What a fright you guv me! But my gracious! how fat you've grownd.'

'Where have dey got to?' he demanded eagerly.

'Listen,' she said, lowering her voice, 'and I'll tell you what I've got to tell you. Are you hearkening?'

'By de good Lord I am.'

'Well, then, I seed your people down on Daltworth Common a week ago, and your dad, he says, if you can just get at our Poley, say as on the 27th of August, early morning, I'll be at Wilming Cross Roads. You know where that is?'

Poley nodded.

'"Tell him," he says, "that I dursn't come no nearer to him than that, and tell him if he is not there at daybreak on Wednesday fortnight as I won't own him my son no more. S'elp me God!"'

'Dat's what he said, was it?' said Poley.

'Yes! that's what he said—the werry artical words. And your poor dear mother is a-crying after you every day. Elseways she's doin' well.'

'Ho!' said Poley reflectively. Then—

'Give us a bit o' tuvlo (tobacco) my blessed woman. I'm most a-dyin' for a smoke.'

Mrs. Sherrard helped him out of a little screw of paper towards life again, and went her way.

Two perplexities were now ever present with Poley Boswell. The first to avoid the paths of the infuriated Mr. Stent, who, being under a month's notice, fell to cursing vehemently whenever Poley came within his range of vision. The second, and far the greater perplexity, was how to be at his father's side at the Cross Roads on Wednesday fortnight. Poley had never been confronted by such a problem in all the fourteen years he had spent upon God's earth. He thought about it waking. He dreamt about it upon his white pillow, but he could not see his way through the trouble. He felt as if he were all the time groping in a dark wood in the middle of the night.

In after years Poley Boswell always thought of it as an intervention of a highly beneficent Providence that early on August 26, by the mercy of the dear God in Heaven, Miss Angela Freeling sent for him again into her fine drawing-room. This sacred place glittered like a shooting gallery with mirrors, and was soft under foot as the turf of the downs.

'Sit down, Elijah,' she said, and pointed out a white skeleton-like chair. Poley sat down uneasily with a thumping heart. He felt that the moment was big with fate for him. Then she unfolded before him a prospect immediate and astounding.

'Elijah, you will go from here to the Rectory to-day. You are well enough for work now. There you will clean the boots and knives and be useful about the house. Later you will work in the garden.'

Poley's face expressed breathless interest. Inwardly, he swore deeply in Romani.

'The Rector has a pony,' she added, 'and you will look after that, which is work you will like Elijah, and can do well.'

Poley seethed with scorn of this clumsy compensation for the cleaning of boots and knives, but his face only expressed expectancy.

'To-night the Rector is dining with me,' she said, 'and he will take you back with him, and I do hope you will be as good a lad, Elijah, there as you have been here.'

Poley encouraged the signs of a sob in his throat, feeling that tears would become him at this point, and at that Miss Angela fell into one of those fits of folly that were so incomprehensible to him.

'My poor little fellow,' she said, with a catch in her voice. 'Of course you will feel losing your parents like this, and it must all seem such a tremendous change to you. But some day you will understand what a good thing it has been for you to have been saved from all that wandering sort of life and to have been placed like this in a quite respectable and honourable way of living.'

Poley left her presence feeling rather stunned. He could not piece together the whole situation at once. It took him the best part of an hour, stretched under a hedge in the park, to see things clearly. But when he rose and limped back to the house there was a light in his eyes which had not been there for days, and he fairly laughed outright as he watched two rabbits leaping over one another for sheer fun and frolic in the sunshine. 'Dese blessed little things have de devil in their feet too,' he said.

It was about eight that evening when suddenly Poley appeared before Alfred Stent in the harness-room. The groom had just put the Rector's cob in the stable and was sitting over the fire chewing the cud of his discontent. When he saw Poley in the doorway he began to thunder and lighten against him.

'There ain't no need to say all them things of me, Mr. Stent,' Poley said humbly. 'I've just come to say I'm sorry for what I've done.' Mr. Stent stared with hard eyes. 'Yes,' said Poley, his words tumbling over one another out of a sheer tumult of contrition. 'I see now as I've done you a wrong, Mr. Stent, along of not minding my own business.'

'What's your game now?' asked Alfred Stent, eyeing him with fierce, cold suspicion.

'There ain't no game. I swear there ain't. I'm only sorry for the mischief I've done you, and far as I can, I want to put things right between us before I go.'

'Get out!' thundered the infuriated Stent, picking up a brush threateningly. Poley held his ground. 'Now, Mr. Stent,' he said, his lips still full of grace, 'if you'll jest listen quiet, I can put things right.'

'Get out!' shouted Stent again, and the brush whistled through the air. Poley dodged the missile with skill, and continued patiently.

'Put things right between us—— There's Mr. Flammock now——'

'What about 'im?' asked Stent, with a sudden interest.

'Well, didn't Jerry Flammock deal far worse by you than ever I did—and—and—you can be even with him if you like.'

'Either speak out straight, young gypsy, or go,' growled Stent, 'elseways I'll carry you out dead myself.'

'Well, arn't I telling you quick as I can? Jerry Flammock has jest gone up the road with two 'osses to the Wheatsheaf. I seed him go. The man's 'arf drunk as he's going to sell 'em to. I 'eard the chap galdering about what he was goin' to buy from Jerry on the inn doorstep just now when I went up to the post. Now Mr. Stent' . . . (and Poley threw an infinite cunning into his face as he said the words) 'if you don't stop that deal for Jerry Flammock and send 'im home with them 'osses on his 'ands you're not the clever man I take you for. There now!'

'But, you cursed little gypsy,' cried Stent, trembling with eagerness but still in doubt, 'I cannot get away from here. I am tied up. I've got to get the Parson's cob in the trap at 'arf-past nine, don't you see, and that gives me no time.'

'Plenty,' said Poley. 'Why, Mr. Stent, you can leave the cob to me, cannot you? I'll harness him for you, if you'll be back sharp to take him round. I'll have him ready for you every strap and buckle of him.'

Stent seized his cap. The fever of vindictiveness had gripped his soul. He hesitated no longer, but just paused at the yard gate to whisper hoarsely back through the dusk, 'Mind you be ready sharp with the trap at 9.20, young Turnbull, or else won't I break you—not 'arf!'

Poley watched his disappearing figure with a curiously eager face, and then he laughed low. 'Alfred Stent,' he said, 'I don't think as I can attend to your business, for I've got to go a long, long way before half-past nine to-night. Tatcho (true) as my dad!'

It was a quarter to ten when Miss Angela Freeling rang the drawing-room bell imperatively for the second time.

'I ordered the Rector's pony-carriage round a quarter of an hour ago. Where is Stent?'

The maid standing in the doorway turned first red and then pale.

'Please ma'am,' she said, 'he's in the stable-yard just now.'

'Well! why does not he bring the pony round?'

'Please ma'am, he says as he's been tryin' his best.'

'Trying his best! What do you mean? I don't understand.'

'Trying his best to find the pony.'

'Find the pony?'

'Yes, ma'am, he says he cannot find the pony nowheres, not in the stable, nor the road, nor the park.'

An awful silence fell on the drawing-room. The Rector broke it, saying: 'Dear me! I don't understand!'

'And the trap?' asked Miss Angela in a tremulous voice.

'Oh, the trap is there in the yard all right, ma'am.' Miss Angela pulled herself together to think, and she was not always 'the small knowing soul' that Poley conceived her.

'Where is Elijah Turnbull? He was to be ready to go with the Rector at half-past nine?'

'Please ma'am, we have not seen him for an hour. We've called loud enough and looked everywhere, but we cannot find him—and please ma'am, we believe in the kitchen, ma'am—that he's gone with the pony.'

Miss Angela turned to the bereft Rector, who was sitting as one in a dream. 'My dear Rector,' she said, with a rather white face but an upward twitching of the corners of her mouth. 'My dear Rector, I am truly sorry about this, but it is borne in upon me, it is somehow borne in upon me that our gypsy boy has stolen your horse.'

And Poley was riding, riding, riding away into the glorious dark of the night. His heart within him was singing songs of glee to the time of the patter of the pony's hoofs on the roadside turf. On and on over the lonely and deserted road. Thank the good Lord for the solitude. Gypsies do not fear loneliness, except in ghost-haunted lanes, when their consciences are afraid and they are not leading the uncorrupt life of a Poley Boswell. To Poley it was a matter of entire congratulation that there was not a soul stirring, not a sound drifting over the fields. On and on through the dark hours, keeping the Parson's pony steadily to her stride—the Parson's pony, game but astonished at these unwonted proceedings of the night. On and on through the dark hours into the grey hours until at last into the welcome dawn. Before Poley's eyes the young day gradually began to shake itself free from the gloom, and then suddenly flashed out in all the brave, glittering, silver array of sunrise, and lo! there in the dazzling first light of the day—with a haze of glory all round—the most wonderful sight in all the world for Poley. A tall, splendidly built and highly decorated dogcart standing hard by a fir wood, and in it a woman sitting gazing earnestly down the road. A man was stooping to tighten the girths of the horse between the shafts.

'My blessed Dad! My blessed Daia!'

Poley nearly choked with joy. His heart was a turmoil of it, but when he pulled rein and tumbled off his pony all he said was : ' This little 'oss is a stayer, dad. Mi-duvel, he's a stayer.' And they said nothing to him by way of greeting, but Mrs. Boswell sobbed aloud.

' Where did you get dat dere cob, Poley ? ' asked his father, hoarsely. ' What game o' mischief have you been up to now ? '

' It's de " Rashai's grai " (Parson's horse) my dad, as I had to take to carry me, else I couldn't never have got to you all dis way with a broken leg.'

' Did you ever hear o' sich a thing in all your life ? ' Napoleon the elder groaned—' but I ain't a-goin' to have no stolen horses into our company. It's bad enough for us now as it is. So make haste and turn him out into dat dere field behind de fir wood, and shut him up. Mi-duvelaste man, do it quickly now, for de tents is twenty miles from here.'

Poley did as he was bid, and reluctantly parted with his mount in a pleasant pasture behind the wood. He patted him tenderly as he said good-bye.

' Think on you don't ever forget me, my beautiful little 'oss,' he said, ' for I won't ever forget you long as I do live for what you've done for me to-night. De Lord bless you, my precious bit o' gold.'

Then he rejoined his parents, who were hastily preparing for departure. Poley was stowed away deep under the seat of the dogcart as a present precaution, and covered up with sacks.

' Eat dat, my gorgeous angel,' said Mrs. Boswell, as she thrust an enormous lump of bread and meat into his eager fingers. ' It ain't the victuals of highflyers and gentle-folks,' she added, ' but it's the sweet food of your own people wot you ought to think all de worl' of now, Poley.'

But before Poley began to make his breakfast he wriggled his black head out from among the sacks.

' My blessed Mother, jest lean over here,' he said, ' I want to say something to you very quiet.'

She leaned over to him.

' What is it you wants to say, my son ? '

But he said nothing at all. He only wreathed his arms tight round her neck and kissed her.

R. O. M.

VOICES.

OH Cuckoo, Cuckoo, away on Knockree,
 'Tis well for yourself now you're idle and free.
 For there you are gaming away on the hill,
 And I in the Schoolhouse obliged to sit still.
 Is it 'When will you come?'
 When I finish my sum,
 If the clock would strike four
 Then they'll open the door,
 Let you call me then, Cuckoo, call loud and I'll come

Away in the meadow the corncrakes shout
 'Will you come now an' seek me? Come out, come out,
 I'm under the window, I'm close to the wall,
 I'm holding the world up for fear it would fall,¹
 Am I under your feet,
 Or away in the wheat?
 Let you seek for me soon,
 I've been calling since noon'—
 And it's here I sit working, nigh kilt with the heat.

The king has a right to make it a rule
 That only old men should be sitting in school.
 I'm moidhered with voices singing and humming
 'The hours are passing and when are you coming?'
 Just a minyit or more
 An' they'll open the door,
 When I've finished my sum
 Be aware! for I'll come—
 Och! Now glory to goodness! the clock's striking four!

W. M. LETTS.

¹ According to an Irish folk tale, told by Mrs. Padraic Colum, the corncrake lies on its back, crying 'I hold the world.'

THE CRY OF MACEDONIA.

MANY centuries ago, in the very zenith of the Turkish power, the Sultan Selim wrote over the door of his Palace at Adrianople these fateful words : ' O ye, who come here for judgment, if justice be not done to you, I absolve you from your allegiance to me ; ' and it is because his successors in the Caliphate have done, not justice, but injustice, that their power is being wrested from them. Sultan after Sultan has ruled since then, not according to the Koran, but according to his own despotic will ; and so rebellion followed upon rebellion, until at last came the revolt of the Young Turk party, and the deposition and imprisonment of the Sultan, Abdul Hamid.

The appeal of that party, issued from Brussels on June 8, 1896, is a very remarkable document. It affords a conclusive answer to the assertion which is so often made, that to attempt to use force against the Sultan to compel him to treat his Christian subjects properly will be regarded by Mahommedans all over the world as a sacrilegious attack upon the Caliph, the spiritual as well as the temporal head of Islam. The appeal, it may be noted, was made on behalf both of the Mahommedan and of the Christian subjects of Turkey. It ends with these words :

' We now solemnly ask, when will the despot, Abdul Hamid, be deposed by outraged Europe, and his corps of assassins scattered, and a groaning people released from tyranny ? Is the work of destruction of Moslem and Christian lives to continue unheeded ? Are the inhuman barbarities by fire and sword of the treacherous Sultan, Abdul Hamid, to go on for ever ?

' KHALIL ZIA, Secretary.'

For a very brief period after their successful revolution, which only took place in 1908, the Young Turks governed fairly well, but, as they grew accustomed to power, they showed themselves to be just as intolerant, just as tyrannical and cruel, as Abdul Hamid ; to the dismay of many who had believed in them, they made it clear that the Turks, as a nation, have changed but little since the days when Bacon penned his scathing indictment : ' And yet this nation hath made the garden of the world a wilderness, for

that, as is truly said concerning the Turk, where Ottoman's horse sets his foot people will come up very thin.'

Massacre succeeded massacre, and the misrule became so great that the Albanians rose in revolt, and the whole of Macedonia relapsed into such a state of anarchy that it was impossible for Europe to look on unmoved; much less the Balkan States. The Liberal party being in power in England, to them the Balkan Christians naturally looked for assistance; the declarations of that party in 1877, and again in 1897, justifying them in doing so.

Mr. Gladstone's speeches are too well known to need recalling, but other members of his party were equally explicit. Lord Hartington, for instance, speaking in 1877, used the following words: 'There is no power which can restore the sap and vigour to the lifeless trunk, and there is no power which can check the growth of the living though struggling tree—the Turkish domination is the lifeless trunk, the struggling nationalities are the living tree, and this House is asked to-night to assert that with these nationalities, and not with the remnant of a shameful past, are the sympathies of the British nation.'

Unfortunately, it happened that the leaders of the Young Turk party had created an exceedingly favourable impression in England. They had made many friends there, who were loth to abandon faith in them, and matters, therefore, were allowed to drift, and nothing was done, until at last the Balkan States felt that they must rely upon their own unaided efforts to put things straight; and so the Balkan League was formed. The revulsion of feeling was great, and it was accentuated later on, when, war being imminent, British warships were sent to enforce the neutrality of Crete, and it was announced that, whatever happened, Turkey would be secured in the possession of her European dominions. Had it not been for the memory of what M. Guechoff, the Bulgarian Premier, has called 'Gladstone's mighty voice,' their faith then in British sympathy, their hope of British aid, would have gone from the Balkan peoples.

But the Slavs are a long-remembered race, and will not soon forget Mr. Gladstone, or the help he gave them in their initial struggles for freedom. And some day, we also, in England, may awaken to a fuller understanding of how great a debt we owe to him; in that he kept unsullied that grand old tradition of love of freedom, and hatred of oppression, which, as a nation, ever since Cromwell interfered to save the Albigenes, we have held to

be our noblest and proudest distinction ; so that it has come to be recognised—to use Mr. Gladstone's own words—that ' Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned.'

How strong the feeling for Mr. Gladstone is amongst the Slavs, was brought home to me, personally, in a singularly interesting way.

It happened that in the summer of 1897, soon after his last great fulmination against the Turks for their atrocities in Armenia—the greatest philippic since Demosthenes, the Buda-Pesth papers called it—I had the privilege of being the guest at Djakovo, the cathedral town of Slavonia, of Bishop Strossmayer, the patriot Bishop who played so great a part in welding together the South-Slav nations of Austria. Our talk naturally turned to Mr. Gladstone and his speech, and to the terrible state of affairs in Macedonia, where the misgovernment was even worse than in Armenia. ' I know,' said the Bishop, ' that Mr. Gladstone is unpopular in England just now, because he wishes to give Home Rule to Ireland ; but in time the feeling against him on account of that will pass away, and the greatness of his work will be recognised. In the Balkans, amongst our Slav peoples, he is revered almost as a saint. They know how hard he tried to gain them their freedom. He has always stood for what is just and right. Indeed, I think,' he added thoughtfully, ' that when the history of the nineteenth century comes to be written, it will be found that almost every great and good movement has had its inception with Mr. Gladstone. He stands for the principle that right is might, and Prince Bismarck for the principle that might is right ; they are at the opposite ends of a balance ; at the present moment Prince Bismarck is much the heavier, but in time the eternal principles will reassert themselves, and the scales will turn the other way.'

Bishop Strossmayer himself had the same intrepid courage that Mr. Gladstone had ; the vehement convictions, the impatience of wrong, the disregard for big battalions, if force only, and not right, be on their side.

All his life, ever since quite a young man—and he was more than ninety when he died—he had been one of the foremost champions of the Slav peoples of Austria. In his early days he opposed by every means in his power the attempt to Germanise them, just as in later years he opposed with equal vehemence the

attempt to Magyarise them. And he it was who, more than any other man, was instrumental in bringing into existence the distinctive Croat literature, and in arousing the intense national spirit which has so knit the Austrian Slavs together that, if Austria be well advised, she will not delay in conceding to them the same right of self-government which she has conceded to Hungary. A federated Austria-Hungary and Slavonia, in the opinion of most observers, would be a stronger combination than the present Dual Empire, with a dissatisfied Slavonia held in administrative subordination to Hungary.

For it is already evident that Austria, at the end of the Balkan war, will find herself faced by an entirely different aspect of affairs. The emergence of a powerful Slav Confederation (the combined military force of which will be nearly equal to her own, whilst at the same time the Turkish military power upon which she relied for assistance will have been crippled, if not hopelessly crushed) is sure to lead to an agitation amongst her own Slav peoples; and her safest way to overcome their disaffection will be to grant them fuller recognition; to create as a counterpoise to the Greek-Orthodox Slavonia of the Balkans, a great Catholic Slavonia which shall include Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and have Dalmatia as its seaboard.

The influence of language upon peoples is a very interesting study, and I was so struck when travelling in these eastern countries by the extraordinary effect produced, both upon the Slavs and upon the Magyars, by the sudden, the almost magical transformation of their language, from a despised, though passionately cherished dialect, spoken only by the poor, to a virile speech used with equal pride by every one, by the greatest noble just as much as by the humblest peasant, with a literature growing every day in richness and power of expression, that on my return to England I spoke to an Irish friend about it, and asked him whether what had taken place in these countries did not lead irresistibly to the conclusion that it is language, more than anything else, which binds a people together, which makes a nation.

'Why don't you make your patriotic speeches in Erse instead of English?' I said to him; 'remember that the Magyar and the Croat-Serb languages sixty years ago were mere peasant patois, just as despised and as ignored as your Erse is.'

'That will come all in good time,' was his rather unexpected reply. 'It was my hush-a-by tongue, and, God forgive me, I have

forgotten it; but now, in my old age, I never go out without a Celtic grammar in my coat-tail pocket.'

It was a touching description of that loved mother-tongue which is the most potent of all factors in the consolidation of peoples. It is the possession of a common tongue which more than anything else has enabled the Balkan States to work together, in the way they are doing, for the rescue of their kinsfolk in Macedonia. It was the feeling of kinship which a common tongue engenders, which, in like manner, impelled Bishop Strossmayer to the almost hopeless task of trying to bring about some kind of reconciliation between the Catholic Slavs of Austria and the Greek-Orthodox Slavs of the Balkans; the very thing the Austrian Government, for political reasons, has always done its best to prevent. It must be remembered that the Serbs and the Croats are really identically the same people; the 'Srbi' or Serbs, and the 'Hrvats' or Croats, being merely different tribes of the same great Slavonic nation. The Serbs gave their name to Serbia just as the Croats gave their name to Croatia; but, owing to some misconception, Serbia has come to be known generally in Europe as 'Servia' and the people as 'Servians'; names which are erroneous and misleading, and never used by the people themselves, and likely now to be dropped.

The schism between the two peoples arose from the fact that the Croats, who in their writing use the Latin character and look to Agram as the centre of their political activity and thought, were converted to Catholicism by missionaries from Rome, whilst the Serbs, who use the Cyrillic character and draw their inspiration from Belgrade and Cetinje, were converted to the Orthodox-Greek form of Christianity by missionaries from the Eastern Church. Their language, however, in spite of their using a different alphabet, has remained practically the same; whereas the difference in religion has produced a deep and bitter animosity, which the Austrians, acting on the principle of '*divide et impera*,' have done their best to foment.

It was this animosity which Bishop Strossmayer was anxious to overcome. If it ever should be overcome, how great a power the Slavs will be! No wonder that Bishop Strossmayer came to be regarded in Austria as a dangerous man; 'our Thomas à Becket,' as he was described to me by an Austrian official whom I had asked for a letter of introduction. This he did not feel disposed to give; but he procured for me instead an introduction to

Archbishop Stadler, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Bosnia, with whom I spent a delightful day in Serajevo, visiting the Catholic orphanages and schools. He asked me, as I was leaving, what I thought of all I had seen, and I could only answer that when I looked at the happy faces of the children, when I thought of the good work that was being done in other directions, of the religious freedom under which all classes in Bosnia live, and then recalled the fact that, scarcely twenty years before, Bosnia was in as terrible a condition as Macedonia, I could only breathe a prayer that the hour of Macedonian deliverance might not be long deferred. I had but recently returned to Serajevo after a long three months' journey, in the course of which I had crossed the mountains on foot from Dalmatia to Bosnia, had travelled through the greater part of the interior of Bosnia, and through nearly the whole of what used to be known as the blood-stained Herzegovina. Everywhere I had found law and order, and an absolute security for life and property under the watchful guardianship of the admirable Austrian gendarmerie.

And yet, that very week, when I had proposed to travel to Cetinje, across the Sanjak of Novi Bazar, I had been refused permission by the Austrian authorities on account of the extreme danger. I begged hard to be allowed to go, and was perfectly willing to take the risk, as it would have saved me a long roundabout journey by way of Mostar and Metkovich (the railway to Ragusa not being then built), but I was told it was quite impossible; that, only a few days before, the French Consul had returned to Serajevo by way of the Sanjak, and had been in such peril from the fanatical inhabitants that they had been obliged to send a troop of cavalry to fetch him out.

It was an illuminating incident; it went far to explain the deep-seated hatred against the Turks which I had found existing all over the country.

Whilst I was in Mostar, the capital of the Herzegovina, a Slav dramatic company played King Nicholas' drama, 'The Queen of the Balkans.' It was received with breathless interest, and though I could only understand the general drift of it—a struggle between the Turks and the Montenegrins—I could not help being moved by the fierce surge of passion which swept through the audience.

I shall never forget, too, the affectionate regard with which, at Gatchko, a little village on the Montenegrin border, the people

pointed out to me Bogdan Simonich, the stately old pope, or parish priest, who was one of the principal leaders in the Herzegovinian insurrection. He exercised an immense influence all along the frontier, and commanded a large body of troops; himself defeating Djallal-Eddin Pasha with heavy loss. He used to unbuckle his sword, they told me, when he had any clerical function to perform, a marriage or a funeral, or a child to baptize, and lay it down in a corner of the church, and when the function was over would calmly buckle it on again, and lead his flock forth to battle.

But the most interesting thing I saw in Bosnia, the thing which gave me the deepest insight into the feelings of the people, was the commemoration of the battle of Kossovo; that last great fight on June 15, 1389, when the life of the Serb nation would have been extinguished for centuries, but for the dauntless little band which fought its way back to the inaccessible fastnesses of the Black Mountain.

In the morning I attended a solemn service for the soul of King Lazar (who was killed in the battle), and in the evening I went to a Serb concert where the national anthem was played, and national songs were sung. The people were quietly but profoundly moved; for that day to every Serb is a day of mourning for the past, but of undying aspiration for the future; an aspiration which seems likely now to be near fulfilment, for the Serbs at the end of the war will assuredly get back the greater part of the lost empire of their great Czar Dushan, and will take their place once more amongst the peoples of Europe as a great and powerful nation.

Bishop Strossmayer's tribute to Mr. Gladstone, and to his efforts on behalf of the Balkan peoples, acquires an added interest at the present moment when Great Britain is called upon, probably for the last time, to elect on which side she will be—whether she will stand by the Turks, as she has always hitherto done—or whether she will atone for the terrible mistake she made after the Treaty of San Stefano, by exerting all her influence at the close of the war on behalf of the Balkan peoples, and not against them, as she did then. If Mr. Gladstone were alive, there can be no question what the answer would be. Had he been in power in 1897, we may feel sure that things would never have been allowed to come to their present pass. He would have compelled the Turks to put into execution the reforms they had promised, even at the risk of war. All his speeches made it clear that he would no more

have hesitated to intervene in Turkey, in the interests of humanity, than he hesitated to intervene in Egypt.

On my return from Bosnia, I ventured to send Mr. Gladstone an account I had written of that country, and of the state of affairs in the Balkans, in which the following passage occurred :

Is it to be wondered at that our present professions should be received with incredulity, and that if we were to attempt to send our fleet to Constantinople we should be deemed to be acting for our own interests and not for those of the Armenians, and that the result would be war ? ' I do believe,' Lord Rosebery said, ' that there was a fixed and resolute agreement on the part of the Great Powers of Europe—of all of them, or nearly all of them—to resist by force any single-handed intervention by England in the affairs of the East.'

He wrote me a very kind letter in reply, saying he had read what I had written ' with a largely prevailing sympathy, but I am bound to add with a sharp dissent from your view that war would have occurred in a particular contingency.' And with the light of all that has taken place since to guide us, it is impossible not to feel how justified Mr. Gladstone would have been in the action he wished to see adopted.

Turkey was not then in a position to offer any serious resistance, and the chances of intervention by the Powers would have been infinitely less than after the annexation of Bosnia and the crippling of Russia by the war with Japan had added enormously to the dangers of the international situation. Indeed with each successive Balkan crisis, the far-sighted wisdom of Mr. Gladstone's policy becomes more and more apparent.

The Treaty of San Stefano, had it been upheld, would have given solidarity to the Balkan States. Serbia, Stara-Serbia and Montenegro would, in all likelihood, have coalesced with Bosnia and the Herzegovina, to form a powerful Serb Kingdom, which would have created an effectual barrier to Austrian aggression, just as the rapid growth of Bulgaria has created a barrier to Russian aggression. And instead of the partition, on the inevitable break-up of Turkey, of her remaining European provinces between themselves, which the Powers have always had in view, there would have been gradually evolved that Confederation of the Balkan States—which has come about now through war, but which it was always Mr. Gladstone's aim to see established peaceably—by means of which there would have been secured to the Balkan peoples the permanent possession of their own lands. That is the policy which at the close of the war it is to be hoped that Great Britain will support ; that the Balkan States and the Balkan peoples

shall be allowed to determine their form of government for themselves ; together with the disposition amongst themselves, in such manner as they may themselves arrange, of the countries they may have recovered ; and above all, that under no circumstances shall any of those countries be allowed to pass again under the control of the Turks. Both political parties should be in agreement as to that ; for Lord Salisbury, on October 7, 1886, when declaring the policy of his Government, made this definite statement : ' Our policy must be to support Turkey wherever her rule is beneficent ; but wherever it is proved by facts that the government is mischievous to the welfare of the people, we ought, in that case, to endeavour to arouse and strengthen independent nationalities which will bring a happy and important reinforcement to the future of liberty in Europe.'

And, looking at the question from a purely selfish point of view, it is quite evident that, to use Lord Salisbury's phrase, in backing the Turk we have been putting our money on the wrong horse. And at what a cost to human happiness ! What Bulgaria now is—prosperous, powerful, self-reliant, content—her capital, Sofia, with a population of 80,000, whereas in Turkish times it was only 14,000—so might Macedonia have been had the Treaty of Berlin not forced it back under the bondage from which it had been freed.

Lord Derby, a very shrewd observer, pointed out the commercial short-sightedness of our policy as far back as 1864.

I think we are making for ourselves enemies of races which will very soon become in Eastern Europe dominant races : and I think we are keeping back countries by whose improvement we, as the great traders of the world, should be the great gainers : and that we are doing this for no earthly advantage either present or prospective.

And in considering the future of these provinces, this fact must never be lost sight of, that the promises of reform with which Europe has from time to time been put off have been shown to be utterly worthless ; massacre after massacre has attested that, until Macedonia has been turned into a veritable shambles : ' Where the Turks are,' says a grim Serbian proverb, ' there will also be the wolves.'

It is useless to delude ourselves with the belief that the future will bring any change ; that there will ever be any substantial reform, or any cessation of the liability to massacre. For massacre is inculcated by the Koran in precisely the same manner that it was inculcated by the Old Testament ; just as Saul was bidden to

smite the Amalekites, and to slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass, so the Koran bids the true believers to attack the infidels with arms and treat them with severity: 'their abode shall be hell, and an ill journey shall it be thither.'

Among Christian nations the Old Testament has been replaced by the more merciful law of Christ, but to the Mahomedans the Koran is still the imperative guide to conduct. 'When the Turks hear the church bells,' say the Serbs, 'then is their anger against the Christians kindled.'

It is this difference of religious ideal which makes it possible for a Christian Government to deal generously with its Mahomedan subjects, but which makes it impossible for a Mahomedan Government to do otherwise than deal harshly with its Christian subjects. So long as the Christians submit patiently to everything that may be inflicted upon them, so long will they be permitted to live, but that permission may at any time be rightfully withdrawn. In the eyes of the Mahomedans they have justly forfeited their lives by their infidelity, and upon the smallest sign of revolt it becomes a right, a religious duty, to extirpate them altogether: 'But whoso separateth himself from the apostle after true direction hath been manifested unto him, and followeth any other way than that of the true believers, we will cause him to obtain that to which he is inclined, and will cast him to be burned in hell, and an ill journey shall it be thither.'

I do not think we Western Christians, who have not passed through their fiery ordeal, can adequately appreciate the heroism these poor peasants have displayed. They have lived in daily dread of martyrdom—for no Turk thinks he does wrong if he kills them—of insult, and outrage of the worst description. All this they have endured, although they have had always before them the terrible temptation of being able, at any moment, to secure for themselves, not only safety, but position and honour. It has only been necessary for them to recant, and to embrace the religion of Islam, to become not merely free from danger and insult and outrage, but to be placed at once upon a level with their oppressors; for one of the dying commands of the Prophet, a command which explains the rapidity with which the religion he founded spread, was that all proselytes should be admitted forthwith by the true believers to the fullest equality with themselves.

The mere fact that these Balkan peasants should have had the

courage not to abjure their religion, to remain steadfast through all these years of trial, ought, in itself, to have earned for them the gratitude of Christian Europe.

Even with disaffection behind them, the Turks were nearly a match for the whole of Western Christendom ; and had they been able to advance with these subject races not only not hostile to them, but fired with a religious enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which is always strongest amongst converts (as was shown by the ardour which animated the converted Bosnians and Albanians)—it is hard to say where their arms might not have carried them.

It is argued, however, that if we do not stand by Turkey in her extremity we shall estrange our Mahommedan subjects in India ; and the message sent by Hilmi Pasha to the Indian Moslems, appealing to them for sympathy and assistance, has imparted to the argument an additional seriousness. But it is not by any means the first time that it has come under discussion : it was brought forward both in 1877 and in 1897, and the Conservative Government, avowed friends of Turkey though they were, on both occasions refused to allow themselves to be swayed by any considerations of that kind. A leading article in *The Times*, dated September 16, 1876, contains this passage :

It is somewhat more instructive to hear that the Cabinet is not afraid to do what may offend the Mahommedans of Turkey lest it should stir up anger among our Mahommedan subjects in India. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Stafford Northcote) never heard a more extraordinary doctrine, or one that he more completely repudiates.

And equally emphatically Mr. Curzon stated the views of the Government in 1897.

I would submit to the House that our policy in Europe in discharge of the responsibilities, which by treaty or otherwise we have on many occasions assumed, ought not to be dictated by considerations of the effect such policy may produce upon the inhabitants of Her Majesty's Empire in India.

It may be pointed out that the danger, if danger there be, applies equally to Russia, which is nearly as great a Mahommedan Power as we are ; and how little Russia regards it is shown by the fact that the Russian regiments which were encamped next to Constantinople at the time of the Treaty of San Stefano were partly composed of Mahommedan Cossacks, and of their loyalty there was never any question. Moreover, a number of the Indian Mahommedans are Shiahhs, and not Sunnis, like the Turks ; and they not only do not look on the Sultan as the Caliph of Islam, but regard him, and all Sunnis, with the bitterest hatred ; the feud

between the two sects being so deadly that it used to be declared by the Sunni Muftis that it was more meritorious to kill one Shiah than to kill seventy Christians.

Moreover, if in India there are sixty-six million Mahommedans, there are also two hundred million Hindus. Looked at from every point of view, the argument will not bear scrutiny. For if it be so vital to our rule in India that we should maintain friendly relations with the Sultan, how is it that the Indian Mutiny, in which our bitterest opponents were Mahommedans, broke out within a year from the Crimean War, in which we had been allied with the Sultan and fighting side by side with the Turks? What is more to be feared in India is that our inaction in the face of a Christian reverse, or, still more, any intervention on behalf of Turkey, should be put down to fear; and that the natives, credulous and ready to believe any story, however absurd, should believe that the King-Emperor, a Christian himself, had been obliged to stand by, an unwilling witness of the massacre of Christians, because the Sultan, the Padishah, is powerful enough to compel him to do so.

It is said that the Tirah outbreak was influenced by the success of Turkey in the Greek War; the Afghans only knowing Greece as the country of Sekunder, as they call Alexander the Great, who has left a great tradition in Northern India; if, they said, the Sultan has been able to conquer the country of Sekunder, a great wave of Mahommedan conquest must have set in. It is victories, not reverses, which are the cause of risings amongst Asiatics. That should be kept in mind when the terms of peace come to be considered; for it is quite possible that under those terms we may have to consent to the practical elimination of European Turkey.

Anyone who knows the Asiatic character will agree that we are more likely to lose prestige by inaction, rather than by action, however vigorous, on behalf of our fellow-Christians; for if we are a great Mahommedan Power, we are an even greater Christian Power: we are merely Mahommedans by rule, but we are Christians by birthright. Now with Asiatics, religion is a very real, a very earnest thing; they cannot in the least understand our political indifferentism about it; and they will certainly despise us if we use our influence against the Balkan Christians from any unworthy fear of incensing the Indian Mahommedans.

And even in England it is sometimes difficult to understand how it is that otherwise sincerely religious people can blind themselves to the fact that this question of Turkey and the treatment of

her Christian populations is essentially a religious question ; and that the present war, like all other European uprisings against the Turks, is in reality a struggle between the two great religions of the West and the East, between Christian and Moslem. On both sides it is a crusade ; and in that crusade we cannot side with the Crescent without betraying the Cross.

When the peoples of Europe—as distinguished from the politicians of Europe—once clearly understand that—as we in this country did understand it for a time when Mr. Gladstone thundered it into us—it will be difficult to make them turn a deaf ear, any more than St. Paul did, to that bitter cry, ‘Come over into Macedonia and help us !’

H. C. THOMSON.

GOD'S PLAYTHINGS.

IV. THE CAMP OUTSIDE NAMUR.

'Sa Majesté ne résout rien ; du moins, on me tient ignorant de ses intentions. Je pousse des cris, mais en vain. Il est clair qu'on nous laisse ici pour y languir jusqu' à notre dernier soupir.'—*Don Juan to Mendoza, September 16th, 1578, from the Camp outside Namur.*

'Nos vies sont en jeu et tout que nous demandons, c'est de les perdre avec honneur.'—*Don Juan to Philip II., September 20th, 1578, from the Camp outside Namur.*

THE Imperial Army, composed of Germans, Walloons and Spanish regiments, was encamped outside Namur, at the juncture of the Sambre and Meuse, where Charles V. had been entrenched when pressed by the forces of Henri II.

The Commander of the Army was the son of Charles V., Don Juan of Austria, the hero of Christendom armed against the infidel, the victor of Lepanto, the conqueror of Tunis, blessed by the Pope, a brilliant name in Europe, half-brother of the great King Philip and son of a servant-girl, near the throne, of the blood royal, but barred for ever from it, a prince yet linked with peasants ; he had blazed very brightly over Europe, the King had flattered him, had caressed him and used him.

By the King's favour he had swept over Italy, Sicily, Africa, a conqueror, almost within touch of a throne. By the King's favour he had been sent to crush the rebel heretics who were rising against the might of Spain in the Low Countries.

And now the King was silent ; it seemed as if he meant to abandon Don Juan. Antonio Perez was always at the King's ear, and he hated Don Juan ; Escovedo, the Prince's Secretary and favourite, was assassinated in the streets of Madrid by order of Perez.

When Don Juan heard this news he thought that there was no better end preparing for him and that Perez meant his ruin ; the King did not answer his letters, and his glory broke like a bubble.

He had been too great, too beloved, too popular ; Philip tolerated no rivals.

And now he began to be unfortunate. The Prince William of Orange, one time page to Don Juan's father and now the Captain

of Heretics, marched against him with a powerful army ; the Duc d'Anjou joined the cause of the rebels ; and the Queen of England, Elizabeth Tudor, at last decided to send succours to the rebellious provinces.

The forces met ; the day of Rynemants was almost a defeat for Don Juan.

A haunted, hunted feeling began to possess him ; in the brilliant south everything had been right with him ; here, in the cursed Low Countries, every step he took seemed a step nearer his grave.

The death of Escovedo weighed on him day and night.

And the King would not write.

Don Juan began to fear and hate his second-in-command, the Prince of Parma, Alessandro Farnese, a man of his own age, but his nephew : for Farnese's mother was Margaret, daughter of Charles V.

This man was in the confidence of the King ; Don Juan knew and feared that fact. He began to dread the sight of the dark Italian face ; the figure of Farnese seemed to him like that of a spy—or executioner.

When he had fought Boussu at Rynemants he had been ill ; when he had held the useless conference with the English envoys he had scarcely been able to hold himself on his horse, and when he returned to the camp on the heights of Bouges outside Namur he fell to his knees as he dismounted and could not rise for the weight of his armour.

They carried him to the quarters of the regiment of Figueroa and lodged him in a pigeon-house or place for fowls belonging to a Flemish farm the Spanish guns had demolished.

No one knew what illness ailed him ; some spoke of the plague, some of the Dutch fever, others said he had worn himself out with the fatigues of war and the delights of Italy.

The fever increased on him ; he wrote to Mendoza, the Spanish agent at Genoa ; he wrote to Andrea d'Oria, his companion in arms of Lepanto ; he wrote to the King. But with little hope, for he felt himself abandoned.

Monseigneur François d'Anjou, brother of the King of France, was at Mons and had taken on himself the title of Defender of the Low Countries against the Spanish Tyranny ; Don Juan had only eighteen thousand men, of which six thousand were Spanish—old, tried troops—and the rest merely Walloon and German mercenaries of doubtful loyalty.

They had scarcely any artillery and but little powder.

The plague appeared in the camp, numbers of the small army sickened and died.

There came news that the English were sailing for Flushing and that William of Orange was advancing on Namur.

Don Juan of Austria lay in the pigeon-house, prostrate with fever, sad and silent.

It was the end of September; day after day was sunny, with a honey-coloured peaceful light resting on the camp, on the two rivers, on the fortifications of Namur; the windmills stood motionless in the stagnant air; the few willows by the river turned from grey-green to dull amber and shook their long leaves on the soft, muddy bank; the horizon was veiled in mist, yellow, soft and mournful; at night the moon rose pale gold through languid dusky vapours; in the morning the sun rose, glimmering through melancholy mists, and above the camp hung, day and night, the fumes of the plague, of fever, the exhalations of decay and sickness, the close odours of death.

Juan of Austria loathed this place as passionately as he had loved Naples and Sicily; the plain with the two rivers embracing the frowning town of Namur seemed to him hateful as some road-way to hell; he dreaded the warm moist nights, the long misty days, the veiled Northern skies, the flat, distant melancholy horizon, and he hated these things more because he sometimes felt that he would never see any other skies or fields but these, never see any moon or sun rise over any town but this high battlemented fortress of Namur.

He was trapped, abandoned, forgotten; the hero of Lepanto, the conqueror of Tunis, was left to die miserably in this vile swamp forsaken!

He resolved, when the fever left his mind clear, that he would not die, that he would live to face Philip in the Escorial and demand an account for this—and for other things.

On September 28th he confessed, on the 29th he received the communion.

His confessor, Francisco Orantes, told him that he was dying, but he laughed that away.

In the evening of that day he fell into a delirium and for two days tossed unconscious, in great torments, talking continually of wars, of soldiers, of conquests and arms.

On the first of October the fever abated, and he seemed much

recovered ; he fell into a little sleep about the dawn, and when it was fully light he woke and sent for the Prince of Parma.

When that general came, Juan of Austria raised himself on his elbow and looked at him with a searching kind of eagerness, and Farnese stood arrested in the poor doorway, glaring at the sick man.

The pigeon-house in which Don Juan lay was the size of a small tent, of clay with niches in the walls for the birds ; part of the tiled roof and a portion of one wall had gone, and through this the early misty Northern sunlight streamed, for the canvas that had been dragged over the aperture was drawn away to admit the air.

On the rough mud floor a carpet of arras had been flung ; there were a couple of camp chairs of steel and leather ; a pile of armour (helmet, greaves, cuirass, cruises, vambraces, damascened in black and gold and hung with scarlet straps) was in one corner ; above swung a lantern and a crucifix.

Facing the entrance the Emperor's son lay on a pile of rich cloaks and garments embroidered with a thousand colours in a thousand shapes of fantasy ; two cloth-of-gold cushions served to support his head and gleamed incongruously against the dull clay wall.

He was himself swathed to the breast in a mantle of black and orange, and covering his lower limbs was a robe of crimson samite lined with fox's fur.

The fine ruffled shirt he wore had been torn in his delirious struggles and showed his throat and the gaunt lines of his shoulders.

His face was colourless with the pure pallor of a blonde complexion, and his long pale waving hair clung to his damp forehead and hung dishevelled either side of his hollow cheeks ; his large grey eyes, whose usual expression was so joyous, careless and ardent, now shone with the brilliancy of fever and were sunk and shadowed beneath with the bluish tinge that stained his close-drawn lips.

His right hand, on which sparkled an emerald ring, clutched at the linen over his heart ; the other was taut on the ground with the effort of supporting his body.

In the niche above him a solitary white pigeon sat contented, and surveyed his invaded home.

Alessandro Farnese, tall and very slender, dark-haired, from head to foot in black save for a great chain of linked gold and jewels over his velvet doublet, let the improvised curtain fall into place over the doorway and stood leaning against the wall, never

moving his sombre eyes from the Prince whose gleaming glance fiercely returned the scrutiny.

'Your Highness is a whole man to-day,' he said; his voice was smooth, low, carefully trained, like his expression and his gestures; Philip's favourites always had this quiet way.

'Whether I shall get well or no I cannot tell,' answered Don Juan hoarsely. 'But this I know—that His Majesty hath forsaken me.'

The Prince of Parma took his right elbow in his left hand and put his right hand to his pointed chin.

'You speak too plainly, señor,' he said. His subtle mind disliked boldness of speech and action; he had always been annoyed by these qualities in Don Juan.

'I have done with pretences,' answered the Prince. 'I think I must be dying, for I care very little what happens on earth—yet I have some curiosity; it is because of that I sent for you——' he paused, gathering his strength. 'Why hath the King forsaken me?' he asked intensely.

'Even if this were so,' said Alessandro Farnese, 'how should I know it?'

'It is so and you know it,' replied Don Juan. 'The King hath cast me down, and he is putting you in my place.'

The Prince of Parma lifted his dark, arched brows.

'The mind of your Highness is still bemused by your sickness,' he answered soothingly. 'Any hour may bring a post from Madrid.'

Don Juan dropped from his elbow and his hand sank on the gold-brocade cushions.

'I was lost when they killed Escovedo,' he muttered. 'There went my last friend. It would have been more honourable to die on the battlefield——'

Farnese answered smoothly—

'Your Highness will win many battles yet.'

The Emperor's son smiled up at him.

'What did Philip pay you to mislead me?' he asked.

The Italian's sallow cheek flushed faintly, and a little quiver, it might be of rage or fear, ran through his sensitive frame.

'The fever returns on you, señor,' he said coldly.

Again Don Juan dragged himself into a sitting posture.

'No,' he answered with a terrible air, 'my mind is very clear. I see what I have been all my life. Philip's plaything—no more. And I dreamt to be a King! He used me till I climbed too high,

and then cast me away ; and you, señor, are to take my place. It was never meant that I should leave the Low Countries. It was never meant that I should return again a victor to Madrid—as servant and as brother I have served the King well, and in his own fashion he hath rewarded me.’

He put his hands before his face and a shudder went through his body, for in that moment he thought of all the glorious past that had ended so suddenly and so terribly.

‘ I suffer ! ’ he moaned. ‘ Jésu and Maria, I suffer ! ’

He fell prostrate, face downwards, on the tumbled couch, and the strengthening sunlight played with a mocking brilliance on the scattered strands of his fair hair.

The Prince of Parma lifted the curtain before the door and spoke to one of his servants who waited outside, then crossed and knelt beside his General.

‘ Prince,’ he said in a low tone, ‘ the fever has turned your mind—— ’

Juan raised his head.

‘ I am no Prince,’ he answered. ‘ I never was—but what I am your mother is, Farnese—you and I alike are tainted.’

A sickly pallor crept into the Italian’s cheek ; he clasped his fingers together as if he prayed for patience.

‘ But you are too crafty to be deceived as I was,’ resumed Don Juan faintly. ‘ You would never dream as I dreamt of being “ Infante ” of Spain, of being a King ! Therefore Philip spares you, for you are a useful man, Farnese, and puts his foot on me because I dared too high—but we are both his puppets.’

The Prince of Parma clenched his hands till the knuckles showed white through the dark skin.

‘ You—always—hated—me,’ gasped Don Juan.

‘ Are you in pain ? ’ asked Farnese gently.

‘ In the torments of hell,’ answered the sick man with a ghostly smile ; ‘ there is fire eating my heart, my blood, my brains.’

The Prince of Parma’s face changed in an extraordinary fashion ; it was a slight change, yet one that transformed his expression into that of utter and satisfied cruelty.

But Don Juan kept his eyes closed, and did not notice this look bending over him.

Farnese spoke, and his voice was still very gentle :

‘ Will your Highness drink this potion ? ’

The Prince lifted his burning lids and saw his page advancing with a goblet of rock crystal, in which a pale gold liquid floated.

The boy gave this to the kneeling Farnese, who took it between his long, dark, capable hands.

'This draught has often soothed your Highness,' he said.

Don Juan dragged himself to a sitting posture; as he moved such a weak giddiness seized him that the clay walls, the rift of sky and the figure of Farnese swung round him like reflections in troubled water.

He set his teeth and put out his hot hands for the goblet; as he drank a sweet languor and a grateful cessation of pain swept over him; he drained the last drop and gave a little sigh as Farnese took the shining cup from his feeble grasp.

As he sank back on his cushions he noticed that a drop of the liquid had fallen on the brocade cushion, and lay there like an amber bead holding a spark of sunlight.

The Prince of Parma rose silently, and beckoning to the page, left the sick man alone.

An exquisite lassitude crept over Don Juan; his limbs relaxed, his breath came easily, he became certain that there were long years of glorious and pleasant life before him; it was only necessary for him to regain his health—to defeat the heretics and return to Spain to confound that villain Perez. . . .

He was slipping out of consciousness; the blue sea of Italy began to rise before his eyes—an endless expanse of celestial colour over which sailed the galleys of Spain, Genoa and Venice, bearing down on the infidel fleet.

The victor of Lepanto quivered with joy; he thought he was back in Naples, in Sicily; the warm scent of a thousand flowers floated round the rose and amber pillars of the heathen temples, and from the high windows of gold and painted palaces dark-eyed women looked, leaning on folds of glimmering tapestry and twisting wreaths of roses and laurels in gemmed fingers.

He saw the myrtle with the frail bridal blossoms, he saw the vineyards with the opulent grapes, he saw ladies in dresses stiff with jewels and heavy sleeves slipping from polished shoulders, he saw peasant girls with flushed faces and dusky hair. . . .

Then these pictures faded; he was in the dark silence of the Escorial; his terrible brother was speaking to him, caressing him; then Perez pulled a curtain back, and he saw his confidant Escovedo, lying mangled on a bier, bloody, with a fearful face.

Don Juan moaned and opened his eyes ; he was light-headed ; he beat his hands on the cushions.

' Escovedo ! ' he muttered ; ' Escovedo ! '

The pigeon above, startled by his sudden movement, flew out over his head and away into freedom through the broken wall.

Juan of Austria shivered and blanched before the swift flash of the white wings as if an angel had passed him.

' I am a great sinner,' he said, with trembling lips. He remembered how the Pope had embraced and blessed him after Lepanto ; he hoped that, in case he died, God would remember it too, and how he had slain the infidel on the coast of Africa. His mind cleared, he looked round for Farnese ; he called his secretary, his page, but no one came.

He lay quite still, thinking now of the great ambition, the great chimera of his life, the passionate desire to be recognised as Royal, as a Prince, one day to be a King.

He had dreamt that he might be King of many countries, even of England with Marie Stewart for wife, but he had never attained even recognition as a Prince of Spain.

All Philip's promises, all Philip's flatteries had amounted to nothing. While he was useful he was caressed ; when he grew too great he was forsaken, left without arms, without money, without men, left with Farnese watching him night and day.

And they had killed the man he loved, his friend, his confidant Escovedo.

That fact rose up horrid, insistent, burning his heart with rage.

He could not forgive Perez ; he could not forgive Philip.

In discomfort of mind and body he tossed from side to side. One of the gold cushions slipped from beneath him, and he was too weak to recover it ; he lay with his eyes vacantly on it, and presently sat up with sudden strength and pointed at it with a quivering finger.

On the gold brocade was a round black hole where the stuff had been burnt away.

Don Juan began to laugh ; he remembered the yellow drop of liquid that had gleamed on the rich fabric ; he shouted for some one to come.

There was no answer ; he supposed that they, thinking he suffered from the plague, would not through fear approach him.

He waited ; his attention wandered from the cushion ; he heard the trumpets without and smiled.

Presently a party of horsemen galloped past ; he could catch a glimpse of them through the aperture in the wall ; one carried his flag—a cross on the royal standard with the proud legend : ‘ *In hoc signo vici Turcos ; in hoc signo vincam hæreticos.* ’ The heavy silk folds recalled these words to the Prince’s mind ; he thought of his success at Gembloux.

‘ I could defeat them now,’ he murmured, ‘ if I was—on horseback—with a thousand men—behind me—— ’

The Lowland sun was creeping across the floor and glimmering in the armour in the corner, showing the dints and marks in it, the worn straps, the beautiful gold inlay and the long pure white plumes floating above the helmet.

Juan of Austria shivered at the sight of the pale sky, the pale sunlight ; he longed passionately for the South, for all the purple heat, the violet shade, the soft hours of noonday silence in a marble chamber overlooking the sea, the glossy darkness of laurel and ilex.

‘ I will not die here,’ he said in his throat.

Presently his confessor came, a slow-footed priest, and asked him if he would not make his will.

‘ No, for I have nothing to leave,’ he answered, ‘ so I am spared that trouble.’

Francisco Orantes then asked if he would have the canvas drawn over the broken roof and wall, for the sun was creeping very near his face.

He answered yes, and it was done ; the barn was now only lit by the glimmer from the one small window.

‘ Father, I am not dying,’ said Don Juan. ‘ When I die it will be in Spain or Italy ; tell the King so—tell him I know that he wants me dead—but that I will not die—like this.’

The priest, seeing he was out of his wits, made no answer, but approached and felt his wrist and brow.

‘ Poison,’ said Don Juan rapidly. ‘ Poison—why not the sword—as with Escovedo ? I have made my peace with heaven—but when shall Philip clear himself before God ? ’

The priest moved away silently as he had come ; the sick man lay staring at the partial darkness ; his blood was flaming with a returning agony.

‘ Philip ! ’ he cried. ‘ Philip ! Will you bury me in the Escorial ? If I die, will you put me next my father ? My father as well as yours, Philip ! Hold my hand, some one—are you all afraid ? This is not the plague. I have watched the heretics

burning—I am burning now—I shall not go to hell ; I am absolved. Who will absolve Philip ? Give me a little ease——’

The priest stood motionless beside the entrance, watching him ; Juan dropped into silence, and then Francisco Orantes came again to his side and gazed as intently as the dim light allowed into the young, distorted and beautiful face.

The Prince was unconscious ; the priest’s bloodless hand crept gently to his heart, which still beat, though reluctantly and faintly.

Farnese entered.

‘He sleeps,’ said Francisco Orantes.

The Prince of Parma made no answer ; a slight convulsion shook him, and his face was swept with a look of limitless pride and ambition which distorted his fine features hideously.

The priest glanced up at him and shrunk away.

‘This seems a foul end for one who loved life so,’ he muttered.

Farnese fingered his long gemmed chain.

‘You serve Philip,’ he answered coldly.

Don Juan struggled back to consciousness, opened his eyes and looked up at the two bending over him ; a sensation that he had never known before in all his life overcame him—a sensation of wild fear.

He fought with his weakness and dragged himself up.

‘Is there no one to help me ?’ he implored. ‘To save me from Philip and Philip’s men ! Jésus, whom I served in Africa, do not let me die, this way !’

Farnese leant swiftly down and caught the Prince by the shoulder.

‘Hush !’ he said, ‘Hush !’ and forced him gently back into the cushions.

Juan resisted him with all his feeble strength, his eyes glittering with terror.

‘You are murdering me as Carlos was murdered—and Escovedo’—his voice was hoarse, broken, but tense with fear—‘as you will be murdered when Philip is weary of you. I do not want to die—I—will—not——’

‘Hush !’ said Farnese again.

Juan dragged away from him and crouched back against the wall.

‘I leave you heir,’ he panted, ‘to all my honours, all my commands. Philip meant you as my successor. I leave you heir to my death of loneliness and exile. When did one of Philip’s servants escape this reward ?’

The priest shivered and his figure bowed together, but Farnese listened patiently, like a man waiting for the cessation of something that soon must end.

The Prince's fear rose and swelled to a stronger passion, hate.

He thought that he saw, in these two instruments of the King, a symbol of the two things that had dogged his glory all his life : the powerful cruelty of his brother that had used his gifts, his successes, his popularity, for his own ends, lured him with the promise of rewards and always withheld them ; and the opinion of the world that the degradation of his mother equalled the splendour of his father and would always prevent him taking that last step into royal rank.

It *had* prevented him ; he saw that now, he saw how hopeless his ambition had been from the first. . . .

' If I had my life again, I would not serve Philip,' he muttered.

Then pain began to seize and grip him, and he became unconscious of everything save the physical agony ; he fell on his face and clutched the rich mantles on which he lay, groaned and shrieked in blasphemous ravings.

' He hath not much fortitude after all,' said Farnese, who had looked on suffering so often that no anguish could move him ; his cold eyes had many times rested on men and women flaming at the stake with the same expression of cruel indifference with which they now rested on this man of his own blood, who had served his turn and was no longer useful to the policies of Spain.

' How long will this last ? ' asked the priest.

' I cannot tell,' answered the Prince of Parma. ' He must have great strength.'

' He had, until he used it in the delights of Italy,' said Francisco Orantes. ' Such a life as his, señor, does not make for old age—— '

' Escovedo ! Escovedo ! ' moaned Don Juan. ' Help me ! Succour me ! I am burning—burning to the bone, the marrow ! Jésus ! Jésus and Maria ! '

' Ay, pray for your sins ! ' remarked Farnese sombrely, ' or you will go to light the flames that burn to all eternity.'

' Nay, señor,' said the priest ; ' he confessed and received absolution.'

' Who shall absolve Philip ? ' murmured Don Juan, who had caught the sentence. ' I wish I had not betrayed Don Carlos. How awful it is to die ! '

Drops of sweat stood out on his forehead, and his fingers trembled on the brocade covering him.

'The war,' he whispered; 'the war!'

He thought of the great armies sweeping to and fro over the Low Countries; of all the toss and turmoil of Europe through which he had moved so gaily, so splendidly; of the infidel smitten in Africa. He did not think of his childhood at all. Life seemed to have begun for him on the day on which he had first met the King in the green forest glade.

'Pray,' urged the priest; 'pray, señor.'

He shook his head feebly; he was not at all afraid of God—only of Philip. Besides, he did not mean to die.

The dreadful pain was lessening in his veins; he turned over on his side and looked up at Farnese.

'Where shall we put your body when your soul has left us?' asked the priest.

The sick man's eyes gleamed.

'The Escorial,' he muttered. 'Philip, remembering Lepanto, might give me that—if not, then Our Lady of Montserrat—but I am not dying,' he added. 'My life is not finished—you must see that—my life is—not—finished.'

An extraordinary feeling of peace came over him; he wondered at it and closed his eyes; he again saw the blue Sicilian seas encompassing him and heard their lapping waves in his ears.

'I will sleep now,' he thought, 'and when I wake I will plan a victory—life is so long and I am so young—'

He smiled; for all the agony had ceased, and he was no longer conscious of his body; his head sank to one side so that his face was turned towards the wall. . . .

Francisco Orantes rose from his knees.

'He died very gently,' he said; 'his soul passed as lightly as a bird to the bough.'

Farnese made the sign of the cross, and his figure dilated with pride, ambition and power; he went to the armour in the corner and picked up the dead man's baton of command.

* * * * *

Philip buried his brother in the Escorial, near the great Emperor who was their father.

MARJORIE BOWEN.

SIR WILLIAM BUTLER.

BY SIR HUGH CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G.

THE death of Sir William Butler in June, 1910, deprived the British Army of one of its most notable figures, and Ireland of one of the most brilliant, witty, complex and pugnacious of her sons. Physically a man of magnificent presence, intellectually endowed far beyond the common run of mankind, and possessed moreover of an unusually strong personality, he stood forth toweringly above the majority of his contemporaries in the Army and out of it. No one who knew him could fail to be struck by the vigour and the innate nobility of his mind; by the generosity of his enthusiasms; by his warm-heartedness alike in friendship and in indignation: yet a close analysis of his character affords an explanation, not only of the reason that Sir William Butler was able to accomplish so much, but of why, in the end, he achieved comparatively so little.

Born in Ireland of an old Roman Catholic family, at a time when religious disabilities and injustices were a recent memory and the tradition of Cromwellian atrocities still lingered among the peasantry, the strongest of his early impressions were produced by the horrors of the great famine of 1846, and by an eviction of which he chanced to be an eye-witness.

'It is a sight I have never forgotten,' he wrote, when age was heavy upon him. 'I was twelve years old at the time; but I think if a loaded gun had been put into my hands I would have fired it into that crowd of villains, as they plied their horrible trade.'

Thus, from his very childhood, Butler was ranged upon the side of the downtrodden and oppressed, as against the downtreaders and oppressors; on the side of poverty, as opposed to wealth; on the side of the weak, as against the strong: and insensibly, England—Protestant England—which had persecuted alike his religion and his people, came to typify for him Oppression, Wealth and Strength.

Yet, in the fulness of time, young Butler joined the 69th Regiment, thus taking service under the arch-enemy. A temperamental fighter, whether in peace or in war, the Army, perhaps, was the obvious place for him; but for one who started life with such strong opinions concerning Great Britain and all her ways and works, it may be questioned whether the *British* Army were the force of all others most nicely suited to his needs.

The outline of his career may be told in a few sentences. As a subaltern, he joined at the depot at Fermoy, and served successively in Burma, Madras and Canada, seeing in the latter his first active service which (such is the irony of Fate) was against Fenians who threatened to raid the Dominion from across the United States' boundary. It was here that he first attracted the notice of Colonel (now Lord) Wolseley—ever a good judge of men—of whose 'Gang' he presently became a distinguished member. In 1873-4 he was employed in the hopeless task of attempting to raise native levies at the time of the Ashanti War, and actually succeeded in causing the diversion which was the object of his labours. On the Staff of Sir Garnet, he served during 1874-5 in South Africa; held Staff appointments at the War Office on his return to England, and again went out to South Africa in 1879 during the second stage of the famous Zulu War. Renewed Staff work at home ensued, this time in the Western District, followed shortly by work with Lord Wolseley in Egypt during the Tel-el-Kebir campaign. He next came into prominence as the organiser of the fleet of 'whalers,' the construction of which he personally supervised in England, subsequently working them up the Nile, in face of natural and official obstacles, with conspicuous success, in the ill-fated Gordon Relief Expedition. When the troops were withdrawn, Butler was left behind to keep the Dervishes in check, a task which he accomplished brilliantly in spite of inadequate resources; warring later, in even grimmer fashion, with the enemy Disease, by which in the end he too was stricken down. After this there followed a short spell of half-pay inactivity, broken in 1888 by his appointment as Chairman of a Committee to enquire into the administration, storehouses, organisation and *personnel* of the Army Ordnance Department in the United Kingdom. His report was promptly drawn up, and no less promptly suppressed by the authorities. In 1890 he was given the command of the troops at Alexandria, during his tenure of which post he paid a visit to the Holy Land; and in 1893 he was given a brigade at Aldershot, and in 1896 was promoted to the command at Dover. From this post he was appointed to the command of the troops in South Africa, where, as all the world knows, he acted for a few months as High Commissioner during the absence of Lord Milner in England. He was recalled just before the outbreak of the South African War, and was appointed to the command of the Western District, a post which he held till he retired from the Army in 1905, five years before his death. His

two principal achievements after his return from the Cape were both of a literary character—his notorious Report as Chairman of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Army Stores Scandals, returned in 1905; and his book 'From Naboth's Vineyard'—a reprint of letters contributed by him to the since defunct *Tribune* during a visit paid to South Africa after peace had been declared.

At almost every stage of his career he had marked his path by the publication of volumes of unusual literary merit. His early days in Canada yielded 'The Great Lone Land,' his narrative of 'The Red River Expedition,' and 'The Great North Land.' His 'Life of Sir George Colley' was the fruit of his service in South Africa. His 'Life of Gordon' resulted from his own service on the Nile. His 'Life of Napoleon' was a tribute paid to the object of his life-long hero-worship—an apparently illogical passion in one who so hated tyrants, until one recalls the fact that the Great Emperor did not happen to be born an Englishman. These and his many other literary ventures all bore testimony to his real gift for letters, but each one of them was a witness to the strength of his prejudices and to the violence of his opinions.

These opinions were formed with an astonishing rapidity, and his belief in their soundness was never subsequently shaken by a suspicion that his data were incomplete. Prejudice furnished the mould in which they were cast; and an opinion once formed speedily resolved itself into an *idée fixe*, insusceptible alike to alteration, modification or revision. He claimed in old age—and there is much in the records of his life to justify the assertion—that it had been his lot throughout to see too far ahead.

'Young man (he wrote), if you would be happy in life, if you would die rich and respected, do not see too far ahead! The rock, the wreck and the lighthouse are all steps in the same ladder, successive numbers in the catalogue; but no one will ever thank you for having discovered the rock before the ship was wrecked upon it, and you may be quite sure that when the Trinity Board erect the lighthouse, they will not put your name upon it.'

It was, for instance, an unusually thoughtful and able young subaltern of Foot who, after barely two years spent in a single Presidency of India, could make the following entry in his diary:

'For my part, I am inclined to think that the edifice we are uprearing in India has its foundations resting upon sand. We give the native of India our laws and our scientific discoveries; he sees that they are good, and he adopts them and uses them as some counterbalance to the misfortune of our presence in his land. He knows that the white man came as a suppliant trader to his shores, and begged humbly for the crumbs of his riches. He believes our religion to be a thing of

yesterday compared to the antiquity of his own. He knows that by violence and bribery, oftentimes by treachery and fraud, we obtained possession of his lands. He knows that by force of arms and strength of discipline we hold our possessions; nevertheless he hates and fears us, and while he adopts and uses the discoveries of our civilisation, he still holds that civilisation in contempt. We pull down the barriers within which his mind has hitherto moved, but the flood of his enquiry being set flowing, we cannot stay or confine it to our own limits. I can see signs that this great structure we are building will be a ruin before it is completed.'

These words, be it remembered, were written in 1863, barely six years after the Mutiny, and at a time when 'Indian Unrest' had not become a stereotyped heading of our newspaper columns, and the idea of renewed revolt was still distant from the minds of most men. They show, at any rate, that even at this early age Butler was a man of unusual mental capacity; but what are we to think of one who, nearly fifty years later, could express opinions such as the following on the strength of youthful impressions gained during a short residence in a garrison town varied by a few shooting-trips into the Madras Presidency?

'It was possible here to see a good deal of the lives of the people of Southern India—the outdoor people, they who bend and toil in the paddy-fields; who dwell in mud huts without the commonest articles of household furniture; who have scarcely any clothes; who are lean of leg and shrunken of body and hollow of stomach; whose women work at water-wheels all day long; who are patient beyond any limit of patience known to white men; who live and die scratching the hot soil and pouring water upon it; the poor, starved race, the feeble foundation of all the wealth, splendour and magnificence the very name of which has made the hungry mouth of the rapacious West water for the last four hundred years. How long will it go on?'

'Gorgeous, starved, degraded, defiled, debauched, mysterious East! I wish I had studied you more deeply when I dwelt with you. And yet I can well believe that we of the old Army, snipe shooting and bison hunting, and serving and even romping with the people, knew more of them and of their ways than did our rich cousins of the civil service. I used to meet in my wanderings many highly paid civilians—commissioners, collectors, judges, and all their deputies of so many degrees; but now, looking back upon it all, I think that the men who impressed me most favourably in the Civil Service were those who had begun their careers in the Army, and had subsequently passed from military life to civil administration. . . . It is Colonel Newcome and the Collector of Boggly Walla over again; and it will remain so to the end of the chapter, even though the colonel should always die in the Charterhouse Hospital.

'I am not quite sure that our new superior person, governor or collector, is a better ruler than the old type of civilian, who was still to be found in the out-stations in my time in India.'

The above are two singularly interesting and self-revealing passages. Nobody doubts that the fate of the poorer villagers of

Southern India (like that of thousands of our own countrymen in the slums of our big towns) is deplorable enough ; but do not let us quite forget that it is the ' hungry-mouthed, rapacious West ' which, on their behalf, has fought and grappled with famine as never in all their long history has it been grappled with or fought ; that it is by our efforts, not by those of their rulers who preceded us, that millions of acres of desert land have been brought under irrigation and have been forced to yield food in plenty, where formerly there was only dearth ; and that for more than a century peace of our making has prevailed in this part of British India, where, before our coming, warfare perpetually raged. No student of history imagines that it was at the dictate of disinterested or philanthropical impulses that the West began to carve out for itself an empire in Asia. The motives by which the European trader-filibusters were actuated were no whit more unselfish than those which impelled Xerxes to undertake the invasion of Greece ; and this being so, no person possessed of an average amount of information or common-sense attempts or desires to deny that the records of our dealings with the East hold many things which we would willingly see expunged. Thus much must be granted : but an unbiassed judgment no less imperatively demands the admission that Great Britain's actions in India have not been uniformly self-seeking ; that, to a degree unparalleled and unapproached in Indian annals, she has devoted her brains, her energy and her wealth to the advancement of the condition of the *rayat* ; and that she has brought to the mighty task of administration an earnestness of endeavour and a lofty sense of her responsibilities such as would have been incomprehensible to those who before her have attempted to rule over Hindustan. All this Butler ignored ; yet these basic facts are the real foundation-stones upon which the British administration in India rests. It is not a bad thing to have a keen eye for a rock ; but it is a faulty vision which can see rocks only.

His strictures on the Indian Civil Servants are even more strikingly illustrative of Butler's mental attitude. The man who, at the age of seventy, recording his matured beliefs, can gravely suggest that a subaltern of infantry, after spending a few days snipe-shooting among a native population, usually possessed an insight into the character, habits and conditions of the people, which is denied to men who have devoted a lifetime of exile to the study of such matters, and who moreover have the initial advantage of a first-hand knowledge of the local vernaculars, must clearly be

regarded as being beyond the reach of argument. But read the passage carefully. It will be noted that the real charge against the Indian Civilian is that he is 'highly-paid'—that he is 'rich'—and therefore certainly suspect, and almost certainly useless and ignorant. That a lifetime of expatriation, in a land where a certain rather expensive prestige has to be maintained, calls for some special remuneration, is a point which appears completely to escape him. For the rest, he takes the ignorance of the Civil Servant for granted, and this is one of the many convictions which clung to Butler through life. Writing of his shooting-trips in the Delta of the Nile, undertaken when he was commanding the troops in Alexandria in 1890-3, he gives vent to a very similar expression of opinion.

'Often when we sat to rest on a bank by one of those little mud warrens in the lower Delta called villages, my friend and I would laugh over the last report of the English consul-general and president upon the prosperity of Egypt, presented to both Houses of Parliament. And he would say to me, "I wish we could take him for just one day with us. He would learn more about Egypt in a day's snipe-shooting than if he sat for twenty years in his office chair at Cairo."

It is almost incredible that Lord Cromer's profound knowledge of Egypt should be thus contemptuously dismissed by a man of Sir William Butler's high intelligence and wide experience; but the passage serves to illustrate the scanty data which sufficed him as a foundation of his opinions, his scorn of even proved officials, and his innate distrust of their judgment and knowledge.

His dislike of the Civil Servant was only equalled by his hatred of 'the trader-missionary,' or indeed of the rich business-man of any land, more particularly if he happened to be of Hebrew extraction; and his belief that these were the two principal tools in the hands of Great Britain for her work of 'empire-building' increased his original prejudice against all manifestations of her imperial policy. In India, as we have seen, he could only perceive the harm which she had wrought, to the exclusion of all the good which she has done. In West Africa during the Ashanti expedition, where he did such splendid work in trying to raise native levies, it was with the people, whom he sought to galvanise into some sort of activity, that his sympathies lay, not with himself who nearly lost his life in efforts to rouse them. At the Cape in 1879, the magnificent manhood of the Zulus blinded him to the fact that this nation of warlike savages were highly inconvenient neighbours for isolated settlers who attached a very natural value to their lives and property. During the first Transvaal War, the pastoral Boers,

living a kind of Old Testament life imported into the nineteenth century, so appealed to his sympathy and imagination that he could forget that they from time immemorial had smitten the heathen (his friends, the Zulus, and all their kith and kin) hip and thigh, when occasion offered, with a Biblical completeness. In the Tel-el-Kebir campaign, where he rendered notable service on Lord Wolseley's staff, his admiration was aroused exclusively by the courage and devotion of the Egyptian soldiery, and he shared the views of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt with regard to Arabi Pasha, and saw in that soldier of fortune, who had fought ambitiously for his own hand, a patriot decked with a martyr's crown. Gordon, the most romantic figure and the most impractical man of our age, was for Sir William Butler, of course, a hero without blemish; and the latter could find nothing but praise for Gordon's action when he released, unpunished, guides who had attempted to lead him and his troops into an ambush, on the grounds that they were actuated by patriotic motives. Magnificent, doubtless, but not war: and some of us, at any rate, will be inclined to question whether the hero of Khartoum was, in this instance, as mindful as he should have been of his responsibility for the lives of the men under his command. Similarly, when engaged in the abortive attempt to rescue Gordon, and in the series of rear-guard operations with which, after its failure, he was entrusted, Butler devoted every energy of mind and body to the performance of his military duties, and where success could be commanded by his endeavours invariably achieved it; yet ever the Arab against whom he was fighting heart and soul was to him the man with 'right wholly on his side.'

'As to their deceit, &c., of which we hear so much, I don't think they are a bit worse than the average acquaintance, I might even say 'friend,' one finds in clubs and professions in daily intercourse of life in England . . . Living side by side with the Arab, you are seeing the Old Testament as you never before saw it. Things are still there as they were. You imagine in England that you are the true inheritors, the rightful successors of these old patriarchs and prophets and kings and people generally. You are in reality further removed in your little Bethels and big conventicles from all sense of spirit of the old life of Jordan and Galilee, of Samaria and Judea, than are the inhabitants of Greenland from those of Peru.'

All of which really means that the Arab of Egypt and the Sudan is a far more picturesque figure than the chapel-going artisan of our English towns, and that this quality appealing to Butler's strong imagination made him at once his champion. The mistake really lies in attempting to institute surface comparisons between

civilisations which are not comparable. No one can doubt that the Khalifa approximated more nearly to a king of the Old Testament than did the late Queen Victoria ; but that would hardly justify a desire to transfer him and his methods from the moral cesspool of Omdurman to the civilised interior of Windsor or Buckingham Palace. Also, no matter how great the picturesqueness of the Arab, and no matter how striking his resemblance to the ancient Hebrew of the Scriptures, his notions concerning law and order and such-like kindred subjects unquestionably needed to be brought up to date ; and it so happened that to Great Britain fell the task of accomplishing this heavy piece of work. The condition of Egypt as it is to-day, compared with what it was prior to 1882, and of the Sudan before and since the fall of Omdurman, furnish to the man of average understanding a sufficient justification for the breaking of the eggs which went to the making of these highly successful omelettes.

The fact is that Sir William Butler, the strenuous man of action, the fine soldier and able commander, was before all things a sentimentalist ; and as is so often the way with the sentimental enthusiast, all his loves were edged with hate. England, rich, powerful and acquisitive—the Civil Servant, ‘highly-paid,’ armed with her authority, and labouring to enable her to acquire—the ‘trader-missionary,’ smelling of wealth, guiding her counsels, and grabbing greedily all that came within his reach—these were the three abstractions that obsessed his mind, that bulked big in his imagination as living embodiments of the principle of Evil, and awakened in him scorn and hatred and distrust finely blended with a generous indignation aroused by the thought of their victims. Himself a rigid disciplinarian, he detested Authority. Devoting every faculty of his mind to the performance of his duty, he did it always with a jibe upon his lips. No soldier ever served his country more loyally than he, or with a more constant energy and disapproval.

And this disapproval could never be silent. Possessed of an unusual gift of self-expression, and blessed, or cursed, with all the readiness and fluency of his Celtic ancestry, Butler was for ever coining phrases to which he found it irresistible to give utterance. He was constantly betrayed into the fatal mistake of ‘scoring off’ his official superiors, and his verbal felicities lent themselves to quotation, and thereby left many a scar.

When a canteen at Devonport was destroyed by fire shortly

after he had in vain reported that it ought to be replaced by a building of less inflammable material, he wrote to the War Office the following epigrammatical sentence :

'So long as the opinions of the man at a distance are allowed to overrule those of the man on the spot, so long shall we continue to burn our canteens in peace, and our fingers in war.'

His official correspondence bristled with similar comments and criticisms to which a barb was lent by the wit that was always at his command ; and in ordinary conversation few could turn the laugh against an assailant so neatly or readily as he.

Once when a militant Protestant lady asked him, during a pause in the conversation at a crowded dinner-table, whether there were any truth in the report that an unhappy lady, whose mysterious disappearance was at that moment exciting the interest of the whole of England, had, as alleged by some organs of the Press, been abducted by the Jesuits, his answer came with crushing effect and without a moment's hesitation. 'No, Madam,' he replied with immense and impressive seriousness. 'I am in a position positively to contradict that rumour. Perhaps you are not aware that we Roman Catholics maintain a religious Order specially for such services. We call them the Trappists.'

But his witty tongue, and his pen too often dipped in gall, made him many enemies, more especially among those of his superiors in the official hierarchy whom he treated as a picador treats a bull. Even men who were not themselves the butts of his neatly turned jibes, or the victims of his swift retorts, regarded as abnormal and not quite sound one who had such arrows in his quiver and who did not hesitate to avail himself of them in official controversy. The real pity of it was that Sir William Butler's love of phrases too often led him to damage an otherwise strong case by exciting sympathy with the subjects of his rhetorical chastisement, and arousing the suspicion that he himself was constitutionally incapable of impartiality. A notable instance of this was the Report returned in 1905 by his Commission of Enquiry into what were popularly known as the Army Stores Scandals during the South African War. It is perhaps, on the whole the worst State Paper ever published. Such documents, to be telling, must be written with calm deliberation and with frigid judgment. Expressed in terms of rhetorical indignation they defeat their own ends. The case which Sir William Butler had

to present to the public stood in no need of extravagant statement; but the whole tone of the Report, and his flowery condemnation of 'harlequins in helmets and pantaloons in putties' which it contained, did more to save from punishment the objects of his scorn than a volume of special pleading in their favour could have effected.

But the pity of it all—a pity rendered all the more keen by the admiration which Sir William Butler's complete disinterestedness, and the innate generosity of his enthusiasms, cannot fail to excite in any sympathetic student of his character—found its culmination when, at the end of 1898, he landed at the Cape, and assumed the office of Acting Governor and High Commissioner of South Africa.

At his interviews with Mr. Chamberlain and others in authority prior to his departure, he received no special instructions, and was given no warning concerning the views of the Government on the subject of the Transvaal question. The natural inference—which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred would have been correct—was that the Government desired peace; and in any event, his plain duty as a *locum tenens* was to preserve the *status quo* pending the return from leave of the holder of the substantive appointment in which he was acting. He bent his every energy to the task of pacifying public feeling, which at that time was being wilfully and systematically exacerbated; of taking stock of the position of affairs; and of placing the authorities in England in possession of the information at his disposal. Gifted with unusual foresight, he saw much which was apparently hidden from the eyes of the vast majority of his contemporaries. He—practically alone among the British military authorities of the day—estimated with some approach to accuracy the magnitude of the struggle into which Great Britain was light-heartedly drifting. He was one of the few statesmen of the time to whom a study of local circumstances brought the conviction that the Orange Free State would make common cause with the South African Republic. His appreciation of the situation, alike in its military and political aspects, was sound and correct where that of his fellows was defective and mistaken to an almost incredible degree; but now it was that the nemesis of his past record fell heavily.

He had poured scorn so often upon the British administrator and upon all his ways and works—more especially upon his lack of local knowledge concerning the lands in which he served. He

had beggared his vocabulary, in public and in private, in season and out of season, to express his mingled contempt, dislike and distrust of the 'trader-missionary' of Europe and Judea. Time out of mind, swayed too frequently by sentiment rather than by facts, he had proclaimed his belief that England was the arch-oppressor of mankind, and that right and justice abode only with the folk whom she oppressed. His views on these subjects were known to the men in authority, and they had become weary of the eternal reiteration. They knew, or thought they knew, exactly what to expect from him ere ever he had begun to state his opinions; and, as it happened, the forces which at that moment were making for war in South Africa chanced to be a combination of all his old *bêtes noires*. The British administrator was typified by Sir Alfred Milner; Mr. Rhodes and his henchmen represented the 'trader-missionaries'; Great Britain once more figured as the 'hungry-mouthed, rapacious' invader of other peoples' rights and territories.

Yet, this time, Sir William Butler's judgment was mainly right—right in his appreciation of the trivial character of the grievances which were being made the pretext for a disastrous war; right in his appraisal of the military difficulties of such a campaign; right in seeing in the threatened hostilities a mere ignoble sequel to the infamous Raid of 1895; right in his understanding of the political situation; most right in his conviction that the money-market was playing too large a part in the whole question, and that war might with ease be averted if the machinations of the capitalists could be paralysed, and the voices of millionaires excluded from the deliberations of statesmen. If any man doubt these assertions, let him study in the light of after events the sorry story of the five years immediately preceding the outbreak of the South African War—that war which was paid for with so many broken hearts, so much blood and treasure, and has reduced the Indian British subject resident in South Africa to a position far more nearly akin to that of the 'helot' than was ever occupied by the Outlander of the Rand.

It is probable that any other man of equal ability and eminence who, acting at that moment as High Commissioner in South Africa, had described the situation with the force and the clearness which Sir William Butler used in his despatches, would have been able to make his voice heard by those in authority in Downing Street. It is possible, even, that he might have made our statesmen

pause; might have averted that humiliating conflict, and have lived to see the federation of South Africa achieved by peaceful means. But, as ill fortune would have it, Sir William Butler, ere ever he landed at the Cape, had discounted by his past record all that thereafter he strove so manfully to say. He was known, but not understood. Men had ceased to attach importance to his opinions on certain subjects—and these were now basic factors in the problem of the hour. He who saw the rock, and shouted warnings of its presence before the ship struck on it, could get no one to give heed to his outcry. Men thought that he was only railing, as so often he had railed. It was his and his country's misfortune that he had blunted by years of opposition in matters of minor importance the instrument which might have saved England from a gigantic mistake at a most critical moment of her history.

How completely he was misunderstood by those in authority—how entirely they failed to appreciate the nobility of his character and the purity and disinterestedness of his motives—is well illustrated by the following anecdote which he himself tells.

‘I had arranged to sail (from Capetown) on August 29th, but I got two or three telegrams from the War Office hastening my departure to the 23rd. One of these threw light on the object of the hurry to get me away from South Africa: it advised me, “above all things to avoid any sort of demonstration by those hostile to English views.” How little they knew the principle upon which I had guided the conduct of my affairs during all these months! They could not understand that there had not been a “gallery” all the time to which I was playing, and that now my audience would not descend *en masse* and escort me to the ship with bands and banners. The pity and the poverty of it all!’

He had been appointed to the command at Devonport, and returned to England to find himself, as one of his few champions, a writer in the *Westminster Gazette*, declared, ‘the best abused man in the British Isles.’ With his accustomed disinterestedness, he had originally declined the technical promotion offered to him, fearing that his acceptance of the Western District might be embarrassing to Government; but the Secretary of State for War had replied that he need not be restrained by any such scruple. The immediate result was that the Queen’s Regulations and his personal sense of discipline forbade him to utter a word in his own defence, what time half the newspapers in England were pouring a flood of calumny upon him. To a man of his fighting temperament, readiness of retort, and love of rhetoric, this self-imposed silence must have been very hard to maintain, the more

so since, as we now know and as the evidence produced four years later before the War Commission proved beyond a doubt, his critics were misinformed as to their facts, and he had an excellent case to put forward if the right to speak had been his. This rigid self-control in most trying circumstances—a control which remained unshaken for four long years—was perhaps the most heroic circumstance of Sir William Butler's life. It supplies an index to his character; an illustration of his selflessness and exalted sense of duty. Many of us may differ from his opinions upon a variety of subjects. Many more must deplore the rapidity with which he formed them, the scanty data which too often sufficed him for their justification, and the violence with which, on occasion, he gave to them uncompromising expression. But everyone must lift his hat to the nobility, the generosity, the disinterestedness of his character; must admire the loyalty with which always he served his country; and must lament that he wantonly blunted his weapons before the moment came when their use might have saved England from a terrible mistake.

*THE GRIP OF LIFE.*¹

BY AGNES AND EGERTON CASTLE.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER IX.

THE POISON AND THE ANTIDOTE.

'If I were a Catholic, my dear John Gordon, and you my father confessor—and have you not, after all, long been my confessor, patient and austere friend?—I should ask you to pray for me.

'If ever you pray—whatever shape your communion with the Great Power may take, remember me in it. I want help and I know no human being who can give it me. My wife has cut herself away from me. I can find no way of filling the chasm, no way even of bridging it. She has said things to me, she is thinking things of me and of our married life, which makes all demonstration of affection on my part almost an outrage. Of course it is the woman who has come between us. And the folly and wretched absurdity of it is that it is at the very time when I know myself at last free, free to the innermost thought, of the old slavery.

'Were I to tell her this, Solange would not believe me: because facts scream against me. What she says is true: I have changed, I have lost my aspirations for high mental life and achievement, my student ideals are gone, my intellectual capacity seems a thing of the past.

'On the other hand, I am becoming a fair landlord; at any rate, a man of business, of action. You would approve. She sees in this, or has been made to see through crooked spectacles, poor child, a degeneration due to our marriage! Oh—why need I continue? We had a scene—most terrible it was. I cannot bring myself to face another.

'So we meet, and talk a little, and I try to take care of her, to be good and gentle to her. But I feel that it is all cold—as cold to her as to myself, and that my every effort puts us further asunder.

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'The woman who, in normal circumstances, ought to help and advise, is she who has brought us to this pass. Solange and I, we stand each alone. It adds burden upon burden to my anxiety and responsibility; there is no one of whom I can take counsel.

'Mathilde, her maid, said to me this morning: "Milady is fantastic. Monsieur must not pay attention. It is her condition. It takes one so sometimes. When the beautiful little heir is born all will be very well, *allez*!"

'It is only a foreign servant who would have dared to speak to me like this; but it brought me a kind of comfort. God grant it may be "very well" again! I feel so ignorant, so helpless, so masculinely blundering.

'Do you know, I actually wrote to Vaucelin, begging him to pay us a visit! Do you smile at this? Old bachelor as he is he has a father's heart for her; and Frenchmen are oddly sagacious, oftentimes. "Come and see her (I wrote). Solange is not well and wants cheering."

'I could not write more fully—to him.

'He answered that he is detained, that he has promised to give some archæological lectures to some *Société* or other (they will be illuminating!). But, like Mathilde, he has a genial reassurance for me: "Do not be so distressed, young husband—*vous en verrez bien d'autres*! But Solange is born to triumph."

'We go on, then, we two, horribly together—horribly apart. And the hour of the ordeal is approaching.

'Yesterday came the designs for the windows of her chapel—a chapel I am having built (to her faith). I spread them before her eyes, thinking to evoke a spark of pleasure in that fixed, brooding gaze; a spark at least of interest. Behind the altar there is to be a rose window, full of angels' wings; even in the sketch it is beautiful and suggestive. She looked at me, after one swift glance at the sketch.

"Why do you show this to me?" she asked. "Why don't you submit it to Aunt Aglaé?"

'Upon my soul I had forgotten that this window had been the Comtesse's suggestion! When one expects a word of thanks, and one meets with a slap in the face, it is difficult not to show that one is—well, ruffled. But I kept speech back; the speech which would no doubt have been as useless as it was foolish.

"Send it to her," she repeated with a little laugh, which is best described by the word *ricanement*—so much is she changed. Solange

sneering ! " Aunt Aglaé will be delighted to see how much her counsels are appreciated."

' Then I said, stupidly enough, because I had to say something and something that must not convey the hot anger within me :

" I don't even know where she is."

' Solange jerked her head, and her eyes told me that she did not believe me. But after an unpleasant pause she said slowly, smiling as she spoke :

" I will give you her address then. She is at Overbecq with our cousins."

" " What nonsense this is ! " I exclaimed. It was absurd that I should colour at the mention of Overbecq. Conscience or self-consciousness plays us damnable and undeserved tricks. " If this is not your window, it is no one's."

' I tore the design in two. (I was glad to destroy something !)
" This window is all your own at least," I went on. " St. Michael, with the face of Niké, as I have a vision of her."

' I spread the drawing out. The artist has quite caught Solange's own expression. I had sent him dozens of photographs and snapshots. The aureole of her hair blown back, the arched lip, the dilated nostrils ; the line of the chin and the spring of the white throat—all is there ; in the strong outline, flat-tinted, proper to the sketch of a stained-glass window, the effect is almost startling.

' My wife bent over the sheet. I saw her face become troubled, and the hard fixity of it soften. A kind of tenderness hovered for a moment about her eyelids and the corners of her mouth. Once more our glances met ; but the moment was gone, the faint impulse towards me had died in her ; the irony came back to her smile.

" " Niké ! " she said. " Victory—— ! Was there not someone who said that there are victories more costly than defeat ? "

' On this she left me to taste the full bitterness of her meaning at my leisure. A year ago she was, mentally, a hardly developed creature, in my eyes : hoyden, school-girl, impossible child, those were the epithets I bestowed upon her ! Whence does this woman come ?

' This morning, over the meal where we first meet in the day, where it seems as if, on both sides, the long hours of the night have brought each of us, fresh from the meditation of wrongs, a step further apart than on the previous day—that breakfast of ours, daily more of an effort, where we find ever fewer words to exchange, where our

glances even are beginning to avoid each other, you can imagine the strain of it all—well, this morning she said to me abruptly :

“ You do not forget that I have a castle in Holland ? ”

‘ I stared at her. Her castle in Holland was in truth as far from my memory as my old “ castles in Spain.” Her fortune is vested in the hands of trustees—I believe Mr. Parkyns is quite satisfied with the settlements. I never looked into them. She saw my astonishment and began to crumble her roll with a gesture familiar to me.

“ Some day I must go there,” she said, not looking at me, yet speaking almost angrily as if against opposition.

“ Go there ? ” I echoed in the former stupefied manner.

“ I shall not expect you to sacrifice yourself,” she said then, and at last looked at me.

‘ She got up then, shook the crumbs from her dress and went out into the garden with her dog. What did she mean ? My mind is still revolving round her words ; I dare not find an explanation, I dare not seek one. We cannot afford another scene. Perhaps, as Mathilde the maid says, all this will pass away. Heaven grant it may be so ! I strain my eyes into the future and cannot see what it holds for us. Thick mists seem to hang about us. How shall we win through, and to what ?

‘ I would end this letter as I began it. If prayers are of any avail, if you know aught to pray to, if ever you pray, pray for me ! ’

Ughtred rose with the dawn of the August day. He had had an unrestful night—no new experience these last weeks for him. The long hours had been haunted by a look in his wife’s eyes. He had met her coming in from the terrace, late in the afternoon, and had been about to speak to her, when the denial in the face she turned upon him arrested him more decisively than any words. He had stood still, and she had gone by him with a quick step, her head averted, her hand clenched in the fold of her dress. The glance had remained upon his heart. He had tried to define the impression, tried to reason it away ; but it returned with the overwhelming conviction of a fact : she had looked at him as if she hated him !

That evening she had alleged a headache and remained in her room. So he had not slept, and was glad when daylight allowed him to return to active life. He resolved to profit of the unusually early hour to visit some outlying farms on the remoter confines of the estate ; and chose to ride, in the hope of shaking himself free of the depression which was unnerving him.

And, indeed, as he rode through the pearly morning mists, his outlook on life seemed to brighten with the spreading sunshine. Though still he sighed over the division of their ways, the hour was one of promise ; a baby hand would soon draw them together once more, he told himself. Surely it would be against human nature were it to be otherwise. Was not Solange, of all beings, the most human and natural ? There were only a few weeks, probably, to wait still ; and, meanwhile, here was a perfect day, the springy turf lay wide to the flying hoofs, and the first tang of the sea-breeze was in his nostrils.

He halted at a farmhouse near the shore, took a long swim and returned to breakfast. The rest of the day was taken up with the never-ending business that awaits the landlord bent upon inspection. Between the slow rides to his various destinations the same scenes repeated themselves with scarce a difference. Wonderful it was how many roofs were out of repair, how many gates were falling off their hinges, how many stables had become unfit for equine habitation, how many walls yawned for fresh stone, how dissatisfied each farmer's wife had become, these days, to have to dwell in a house devoid of a bathroom.

He was no longer the dreamy, self-conscious, carelessly generous master. He went into detail with a thoroughness that at once disappointed rustic tenants and increased their respect for the new ruler. If the agent who had met him at one of the most important homesteads still shook his head over undue lavishness, he did not venture upon the half-contemptuous remonstrance. Sir Ughtred had become as much a master among his people as old Sir Edward himself.

He was seated in the stone kitchen of the last cottage on his list, when a burning carmine spot on the wall blazoned the hour to his eyes. He looked at his watch : so late ! He could hardly reach home for dinner, and he had never failed to do so yet. Solange might be anxious—or hurt. He hurriedly bade farewell, sent for his horse, and set across the down at hunting pace. The whole sky was a furnace of colour. He knew that, behind him, the waves must be leaping with vermilion-topped crests and hollows of ambers and greens, a spectacle such as the eye of man may but rarely see. But he would not give pause to his haste, he would not waste a moment to take measure of the glory he rode through ; weigh carnation splash against lake of honey ; count the crimsons, the riot of tulip hues flaunted from arch to arch of the horizon. Yet that glowing

sky was destined to be the most vivid memory of his after-years ; a vision to haunt his sleep with nameless dread ; an impression so stamped upon his nerves by subsequent association that never, in his whole existence, could he afterwards look upon the sunset—that noblest aspect of the heavens—with a free heart.

A few faint stars were already peering out into the twilight, when he reached Honor Maxwell. He had scarcely had time to jump from his horse when a servant ran down the steps to lay hold of the bridle. Looking up, he saw the hall door wide open and the hall within flooded with light.

The sense of something ominous had laid hold of his soul before even the expression of his butler's face was made visible to him in the shaft of light. It was portentous with ill news.

'Her ladyship is not so well.' The stereotyped domestic formula fell with a special note of significance. Ughtred was brushing by when the next words brought him to a petrified halt.

'The doctors are in the library, Sir Ughtred, in consultation. Shall I inform them——'

'Doctors ?'

'Doctor O'Grady from Brackenthwaite, and a gentleman from Liverpool,—a specialist, Sir Ughtred.'

Ughtred heard no further. He put his hand uncertainly to his temple and drew it back wet. So it had come upon him at last, the terror that life can bring ! He knew vaguely that he walked like a drunken man across the hall. On the threshold of the library he had to pause, to fight the sick shrinking of his heart. Now he knew why the sunset's splendour had been so appalling. He set his teeth and went in.

Two men rose from their closely-drawn arm-chairs. One had a large pale face, and Ughtred noted that the scant hair lay in streaks about the bald forehead as if with the heat of a hurried journey. The other face he knew ; it was that of the jovial being who had set his broken leg, so long ago, at Crossforth House. At least he knew it for the same, but there was no joviality about it now ; it was twisted with anxiety, he almost thought a kind of guilt. They stood, the two arbiters of his fate : what were they going to tell him ? The man with the large pale face had a piercing eye. Suddenly he spoke, quickly :

'We are in some anxiety about Lady Maxwell.' The measured voice became altered. 'Won't you sit down, Sir Ughtred ?'

Ughtred was not quite sure, but he thought he was pushed into

a chair, and it seemed to him that both men were looking at him with pity in their eyes. Then Doctor O'Grady sat on the other side of him and began to talk. He too seemed hot. Ughtred wondered why, since he himself felt so cold that his clasped fingers were as ice against each other. He found himself wondering whether Solange was cold, too, upstairs. Whether her hands—ah! God, no, not that!

'And so,' Doctor O'Grady was saying, hurling out his words as if in a mighty hurry, 'not being quite satisfied, I took it upon myself, in your absence, to telephone for Doctor Fowler, and——'

A voice on the other side took up the thread; a low voice with a clear utterance. Ughtred mechanically turned his head. Such a common looking man, but his eyes were full of power and knowledge!

'I don't understand,' said Ughtred suddenly, clasping his forehead with those icy fingers.

'I must not be too technical,' said the specialist with a smile—he could smile—'the symptoms are unusual, a little perplexing, and'—there was a sudden inflection—'disquieting. To be frank, I have only seen one other such case. In that instance it was the result of extreme physical fear.'

'Ah!' interrupted the Irishman, 'that's not the trouble here, I'll lay my life. Anyone who has seen Madmesell Solange go at a fence—beg pardon, Sir Ughtred, I mean Lady Maxwell—would know it's not want of pluck.'

'I know it is not,' proceeded the other man quietly. 'I am not trying to discuss the cause, my good sir, but the symptoms.'

Ughtred, though he tried to keep his attention on their speech, found his thoughts perpetually blown away as a leaf upon some gust of wind. Solange afraid! No, she was never that. Solange leaping the dyke upon her yellow horse . . . Solange drenched yet dauntless on her perilous passage along the tide-swept coast . . . Solange daring the abyss and smiling at the void. His brain reeled . . . he wished that vision would not rise before it now. He recalled himself with a painful effort, for he suddenly knew himself addressed.

'We can leave the patient to nature, or we can try what science will do. Either way I do not conceal it from you, there is risk. The heart's action——'

Solange's heart—her strong, brave heart! Then, all at once Ughtred gathered what was wanted of him. He was expected to decide for them; in his hands, in these miserable, cold,

nerveless hands, was placed the balance in which swung the existence of his wife—and of his child! He sprang to his feet upon a mad impulse to escape.

‘Yes, yes,’ exclaimed the Irishman, mistaking the purport of this violent movement and speaking soothingly, ‘you can go to her. In any case we would like to wait an hour or two. Dr. Fowler’s prescription——’

He was leading the way towards the door as he spoke, and blindly the master of the house was following, when a firm touch was laid on his arm.

‘Precede us, if you please, Doctor—ah, Doctor O’Grady,’ said his great colleague, and Ughtred stood obedient. There was a kind of comfort in the pressure of that hand on his arm: it was so decided. ‘Lady Maxwell’s condition is that of a person suffering from shock. There seems to be some mental strain, something that has affected her in her present condition to an abnormal extent, to the extent of interfering with the course of nature itself. If there is any anxiety you can allay, or any difficulty—She has something on her mind, that is certain. You know best.’

The young man heard with a stabbing sense of misery. He opened his lips to speak, no sound came. The decisive hand propelled him towards the door.

‘The sooner you go to her the better. She has been watching for your return—very naturally.’

At that Ughtred ran. He had a coward’s dread of seeing Solange ill, Solange changed, suffering. But far greater than this abject shrinking of the nerves was the passion in his heart to be with her, to hold her, to be rent with her suffering. At the head of the stairs he crossed Mathilde, who fled from him. He saw that her face was swollen and glazed with violent weeping. At the door of the room, wide open, a strange woman in nurse’s dress received him. There was a pungent odour of aromatics in the air, though both the windows were flung wide and the curtains were swishing against the floor as they swung backwards and forwards.

As he entered, the woman, who had an offensive professional briskness about her, stepped back to the bed and took up a fan. O’Grady, posted at the foot, turned a grave face from his contemplation of the patient.

‘That will do, nurse,’ said the specialist from the threshold. ‘Doctor O’Grady, we can leave Sir Ughtred with Lady Maxwell for a few minutes. Nurse, a word with you in the dressing-room.’

Ughtred's eyes had flown at once to Solange. Propped with pillows so that she was almost sitting upright, she was, as he saw with an indescribable failing of the spirit, panting for breath. She had often, in her vigour, had a look as of one who had been running; but now those delicate nostrils were fluttering in an actual struggle for the air of life. Her parted lips were slightly drawn back, and there was a faint discoloration about them and about her eyes. Those eyes! At first they did not seem to notice his entrance; they were staring past him, as at something beyond; something terrible that yet was full of attraction. It came upon him that the vision of her, poised upon the rock, fixing the chasm, had been but a foreboding of this awful reality.

'She is looking at death!' he said to himself. Even as the thought rose, her gaze was brought back from that distant and fearful vision and rested on him. And still it was a dreadful look, one that robbed him of all power of speech. He came to her not daring to touch her. It was she who spoke first, and the throbbing of her heart pulsed even into the whisper that formed the words:

'So you have come back——!' There was a pause, she gathered her strength again. 'I thought you had gone!'

'Gone!' he repeated. 'Do you mean, left you?' He believed she was wandering. 'Darling, if I had guessed, if I had known——'

With a gesture she put him from her, and still her eyes accused him. She drew that labouring breath, fluttering with her pulses, and went on:

'If you had known—you would have gone.'

He fell on his knees beside her, agonised.

'Solange, beloved! What could ever take me from you! Solange, my darling, are you not dearer than all the world—Solange!' He caught at the hand that lay close to him with a pang at the thought that it looked worn as the hand of one who has had a long illness. It was so pale—so pale! Yet his own touch was colder than hers. 'Solange,' he implored again, and covered that pale hand with kisses.

She drew a shuddering breath and moved in the bed. And glancing in fresh apprehension, he saw the livid discoloration spread on her face to the glorious parted hair that lay dishevelled like broken wings on the pillow. He leaped to his feet ready to call.

'Non!' she said hoarsely, forbidding.

And her eyes in their shadowed setting still intent upon his face, she drew again one more determined breath and shifted herself

so as to plunge her hand deep under the pillows. She brought it out again, clasping a sheet of tinted paper crushed into a ball, which she held towards him.

'It was for you,' she said. 'It came yesterday. I kept it. And I am dying of it.'

As she moved, the lace of her dressing jacket had fallen apart, and under the fine cambric he could see the mad beating of her heart. The terror and the pity of it so seized upon him that, though he took the thing she offered him, he held it vaguely without consciousness.

'Read,' she insisted.

The look in her eyes had changed. Still set upon him with an intensity beyond words, it seemed now that there was fear in them; and his soul was wrung with a fear of her fear that brought the sweat to his forehead.

'Read,' she insisted again, her gaze, more urgent even than her laboured speech, burning upon his face as if now must be written upon it the verdict that should uplift or destroy her.

Striving to pacify her, he set himself to obey, spreading out the crumpled sheet.

The words zig-zagged under his eyes: '*Come to me, I am dying. Aglaé. . . . Come to me, I am dying. Aglaé.*' He did not know what they meant; only that one word 'dying' leaped at him. Dying—that was what Solange had said of herself! The telegram fluttered unheeded from his fingers. He cast himself upon the bed at her side, and anguish broke from him in stammered phrases.

'Solange, wife, beloved, live for me! If you die, I die! Heart of my being, I could not live without you. Solange, beloved—unutterably dear, my own wife—my soul, my soul!'

A long sigh escaped her lips. Her shaken body relaxed against him, her head fell towards him. He thought he had killed her. Lifting himself to look upon the sight that must break his heart, he saw that she was smiling, and that the lips that smiled were soft with a new-risen faint rose. A moment he hardly knew if this were not, after all, Death—Death and ecstasy together. But the next he felt her hands seek his.

'Then all is well—then I will live,' she murmured.

And, as close he held her, he felt her draw her breath and knew that with each hard effort it came more steady and more free. It was perhaps but a few minutes, seconds even, that in a profound

silence, his arm about her shoulders, her hands in his, her head against his breast, he held her so ; moments in which the torture of the last half-hour gave way before the most exquisite yet poignant emotion he had ever felt—joy still trembling in agony, hope reviving upon the very lip of death ! Beneath his hand he knew that the agonised and perilous beating of her heart was being appeased. And together with the peace that was growing upon her soul, more clearly than ever speech could have conveyed, thoughts of hers passed into his comprehension.

He knew in the same way that his thought was giving itself to her. She had said to him that she would live—Solange was not one to break her word ! But, suddenly, the revelation came to him, and it was like a flower opening in his heart, filling his whole being with fragrance and tenderness unimaginable :

Let it be life or death, he and she had touched the highest together. And that was eternal. Solange, who had reproached him that he had no soul left to give her !

He had drunk of the wine cup after all and found it a sacrament.

CHAPTER X.

THE DEATH OF A SOUL-EATER.

DOCTOR FOWLER had been watching them for some time before Ughtred became aware of his presence. Then the large pale man came forward and, as the husband drew back, felt his patient's heart. He nodded across the room at his colleague's anxious face.

'I should repeat that draught, I think,' he remarked quietly, and so saying turned to Ughtred. 'We shall have good news for you in a few hours.'

Thus dismissed, Ughtred left the room. The image he carried away with him was of Solange's face smiling upon him from the ruddy aureole of her hair.

It was after midnight when he was told his child was born, and it was Doctor O'Grady who brought the tidings into that vigil of vivid and solitary apprehension. The good-hearted Irishman was so excited that he babbled like a tipsy man.

'What did I tell ye, now? Didn't I say it was the bravest creature that ever drew breath? Begad, there never was a fence too big for her! She threw her heart across and flew over like a bird. Like a bird, my boy!—Splendid, both of them. By the lord, as I said to Doctor Fowler a moment ago, it's a triumph, a victory! Ah, Sir Ughtred,' went on the good fellow, still pumping the cold hand up and down, 'if only the grand old boy, the uncle, were here to see them!'

'Merely a few minutes, please,' said Doctor Fowler, putting in his head at the door of Solange's room. 'Yes, I am quite satisfied, but I want as little talking as possible.'

Solange had been imperious and had demanded to show his child to her husband herself. So it was lying in the hollow of her arm as he bent over her.

Though the light was shaded, he could see that she was very pale, and that the masses of her brushed-back hair were drenched as if a wave from that Deep she had hovered over had leaped up and caught her. But peace and a great content seemed to emanate from her. And the man's soul, racked by so many varied and terrible emotions, became aware as of something wonderful yet natural in the air about her; something that laid hold of him and put his tormented heart at rest.

He had only eyes for her, thoughts for her only. But to the gesture of the languid hand drawing apart the covering about the little head and to the question of the happy eyes, he had to make answer:

'Our child is beautiful. *Il est beau, mon âme . . . beau comme notre amour!*'

It was only late next morning that he remembered, with a shock of retrospective realisation, the telegram, its purport, its summons. He had been stunned by the swift events of the night. '*Ughtred, come to me, I am dying.*'

The words wrote themselves again before his eyes. His first impulse was one of overwhelming anger. How dared she claim him thus, even from a deathbed? Now, as in a lightning flash, he understood. When Solange had passed him with that look of hatred, she had the telegram in her hand. Had he not her own confirmation of the fact—'It came for you yesterday; I kept it.' It had been the first fault against her crystal candour, her

unhesitating straightforwardness that she had ever committed—he could swear that—and she had committed it for love of him ! He loved her for it, loved her more tenderly and intimately for the single exquisite womanly fault than for the whole of her splendid rectitude. His heart gave way when he thought of her lonely hours during that long-drawn yesterday of suffering and doubt. The torment of spirit had nearly conquered Niké.

‘ I am dying of it,’ she had said to him.

His anger deepened. Even at the supreme hour of his life, *la mangeuse d’âmes* had stretched out her grasping hand to clutch him. Had he received that summons upon the evening when it ought to have reached him, might he not have obeyed it ? What choice would he have had but to obey it ? He then would have left his wife in her young strength ; he would have come back to find her dead ! *As the shuddering horror of it came upon him ; as his too active imagination pictured the straight, still body, the white upturned face, amid the mocking ruddiness of the hair, there subtly glided between him and this vision another : Aglaé with the hand of death upon her ; Aglaé struggling against dissolution because of her desire to see him once again.

He tried to tell himself that her urgent message was but another trick. ‘ Such as she do not die,’ he cynically assured himself. But it was against his innermost convictions. She would never condescend to this vulgar trick, he knew that. He knew, too, with the certainty of accomplished fact—against which the most plausible fancy will work in vain—that it was indeed from her deathbed that the woman whom he had once loved, had sent her cry to him—the cry that he had heard, unheeding, by the side of what might have been the deathbed of the woman he now loved.

Terrible and singular freak of fate for Ughtred, who had sworn to give no woman power over him !

His solitary breakfast was a very incomplete meal, as he sat brooding. Though the morning news had been full reassuring, and Dr. Fowler had taken his departure, vowing there would be no need for his return, the young man’s heart leaped in apprehension at the sound of every step without, at the raising of any voice above an even tenor. He laughed at the thought of putting as much as a furlong between himself and his wife’s bedside. And yet Aglaé’s eyes watching the door, Aglaé’s mysterious soul, clinging to its frail earthly tenement, in yearning for the futile comfort of one last meeting. . . . The haunting was becoming intolerable ! The least

he could do, and the utmost, was to reply. He sent for a telegraph form and wrote hastily: 'Cannot leave Solange, our child was born yesterday.'

And even while he paused, pencil on lip, searching for some word of human kindliness to soften the brutality of the refusal, an orange envelope was held under his eyes. He gazed at it a moment without taking it; then broke it open, dreading a second appeal. Something evil and irritable called out within him: 'Will she not die without having her will of me?'

But the message ran with terrible business-like brevity:

'The Comtesse Annibal de Braye died this night; funeral here Monday.'

And it was signed Vaucelin.

'Though you decline the responsibilities of a god-father,' wrote Ughtred to John Gordon, 'I cannot help looking upon you as some kind of ghostly relation to our child. At any rate he is to bear the absurdly connected names of John Ughtred Annibal. My wife will have the Ughtred—the others explain themselves.

'Vaucelin is here. He has held the little John over the font of Solange's new chapel. Excellent fellow, he does nothing but lament the removal of his dear Annibal before the realisation of his life's desire. "How he would have been happy," he cries, dandling the infant with a skill that fills me with wonder and envy; and the tears drip from his pointed beard, quite unashamedly—of course he wants both hands to that frail burden.

'He came to us straight from Overbecq, after her funeral. He had a way of scanning me with a keen surreptitious look, those first days after his arrival. Then we had a long "talk" together—the talking all done by him, as usual—and now he has ceased to look for hidden symptoms of distress. Indeed, it is touching to see how he expands to our happiness. Nevertheless, he will always remain beside the mark on many a point.

"What a good thing," he has said to me, once or twice, "that she should be dead, that poor Aglaé; for so long as she lived she would have brought trouble!" As if anything now could make any difference! And yet, though I cannot pretend to mourn her, or to wish her back, about her memory there will always lie in my mind a haunting sense of melancholy. And, dear John Gordon, I should not be humane, I should not be human, did I not feel that I

shall always carry in my soul an aching sadness for the sadness of her last hours.

'In that incoherent letter I sent you, two days after those terrible and wonderful events which have revolutionised my life, I told you, did I not? how she had summoned me—I often ask myself why. Mystery all the days I knew her, she remains mystery to me to the end. What would she have had of me upon that awful threshold? What was the stamp which she would fain have left on me for the remainder of my journey? But one thing is clear: she wanted me passionately—if such a word could ever apply to her.

'Whether she asked for Vaucelin, or whether the Overbecq cousins, of their own initiative, sent for him, anyhow he was there. He has not spared me a detail—partly, no doubt, from his desire to probe my feelings, partly from his natural garrulity: "It was Stanislas who brought me up to her, himself. He introduced me with the announcement: 'Here is a visitor.' *Mon jeune ami*" (said Vaucelin, leaning forward and tapping my knee as he spoke, and I saw his brows drawn together with the vividness of the piteous recollection,) "she raised herself from her pillows, lifting both hands, her face all alight—then she saw it was only the old Vaucelin—and I tell you that, looking at her, I beheld at the same moment death laying hold of her. She fell back; the light went from her face like an extinguished candle. That creature—that demon, Stanislas!—nothing will persuade me, but that he did it on purpose! He had been horribly in love with her, after his fashion, he also, and he was paying back his grudge over her death-bed. *Quelle âme pourrie!*

"He knew of that telegram to you, of course . . . and she had made herself so beautiful! Just for that moment before she saw me, as I looked in upon her, I thought I had never seen her more beautiful. The fever had given her a carmine on the cheeks! And her eyes—I told you how they were lit up. In a cloud of lace, perfumed, with flowers about her—it was the image of a bride, not of a dying woman.—And then the change! The joy and expectation gone . . . death, dissolution, nothing but that, left to her!"

'There Vaucelin broke off, the ready tears in his kind little eyes. But, as I listened, I felt hard, angry. Had I not the vision of my own wife watching for me from the bed which might have been that of her death, which was certainly that of her agony? How dared another deck herself like a bride because she expected me?

'Presently Vaucelin went rambling on. He said singular things

—I wonder if they were true—and things of such terrible pathos and misery that as I say, I had not been human had they not pierced me at last.

‘He was left alone with her (he told me) just for a few minutes then. She tried to smile at him: she had always been delicately courteous. “*Mon bon Vaucelin*,” she said. And then she spoke of me: “He will not come. He has not even answered. It is finished.” “And then,” said Vaucelin, “there came upon her face a look of the most intense and mocking bitterness that I have ever seen any countenance bear. ‘To make the greatest sacrifice of one’s life, and to find that there was nothing to sacrifice, that is what one may call being supremely ridiculous, is it not?’ she said that to me. ‘I gave him up,’ she said, ‘and he was not mine to give. Is it not silly!’ And she began to laugh, she who could already hardly breathe. It was pneumonia, you know. She was getting worse. I wanted to call in the Sister, but she would not let me. Already a little delirious, I think,—but she had a will of steel, and she kept her ideas together—she would speak, she that had always been so secret. ‘I loved him,’ she said, ‘the only one of them! But he did not love me. He who loved me was Antoine.’ And then she said again ‘*Je l’aimais*’; I knew it was of you she was speaking. ‘In the end I loved him just like any other woman, and that is my punishment.—He said he loved me—why does he not come?’

“She was breathing—*mon Dieu*, it was terrible—like the grinding of a saw against wood; it hurt me in my chest to hear her! Then she suffocated, and I lifted her on her pillows. And as I was so close to her, she suddenly fixed her eyes upon me with a terrible despair. ‘It is finished,’ she said; ‘let them send in the priest.’

“And then again, oh, it was horrible, she smiled! ‘I must think of my soul,’ she said.

“She had spoken of soul all her life, poor woman. All her talk was of soul things, was it not? But of her own soul she had never thought till that moment. That is what I saw in her eyes then, the awfulness of it, the tragedy and the irony.

“I met the priest—you remember the good little plump *curé* of Overbecq—as he came out of her room, later, to fetch the holy oils. ‘She is resigned,’ he said. Madame de Flesselles and I, and Isidore, and the servants, we were all at the last ceremony: you know our custom. I think she was nearly unconscious; she looked

at none of us, but she held her cross closely, tight. She was abandoned ; there were none to love and regret her, but she had that."

'Vaucelin began to pace the room. He was struggling with the emotion born of his own words. "Ah, that fat Julie, to think of her being now Comtesse de Bray, in the place of the other ! For there never was one like Aglaé—elegance, poetry, mystery, charm ! *Mon pauvre Annibal, en était-il fou !* And how he revolted her from the very word of love ! and yet never was one of her essence more created for it, more bent on its conquest !

"*Elle en voulait à l'amour*—she had a spite against it, the earthly love : a mortal grudge. But the spirit of love, she thirsted for it ; she would have it to the point of tearing a man's soul for it. Tearing ? No, it is not the word for her ; drawing it forth slowly, delicately, relentlessly—a vampire ! Succubus ! What did I call her for you, that day at Overbecq—*Mangeuse d'âmes !* Eh, have you not had an escape ? *Hé, young man.* The good hand of Niké that was held out to save you——"

'Of Solange, what praise can he give that my heart does not echo ! Yet, even by those well-meaning lips, I cannot endure to have my wife discussed. You alone, old friend, who stood by me with such patience and such kindly sternness ; to whom, indeed, I owe not only life's honour, but life's happiness, must be told something of how good things have become to me now—you who must have been surfeited with the tales of my trouble.

'Life is good, John Gordon, yes, even this work-a-day human life that I once dreaded and scorned ! I admit it : Niké has fulfilled herself. Do you remember my writing to you that she was no more to me than just the simple fare of life, the bread and the water, the things which a man takes as his due ; which he must have pure and good, but considers scarce worth a thanksgiving ? Do you remember how I groaned then for the lust of the wine ? Since after all I might not escape the law—I called it the curse of life. Now it is Solange's hands—those good hands, as Vaucelin says—that lift to my lips the chalice filled to the brim : filled with the wine.—Such wine !'

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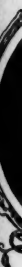
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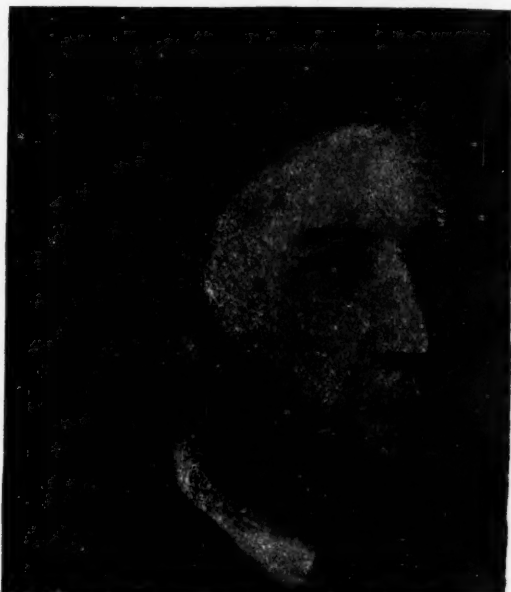
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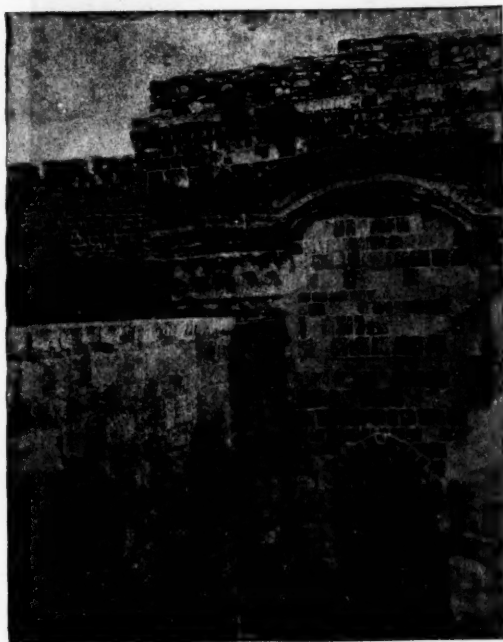
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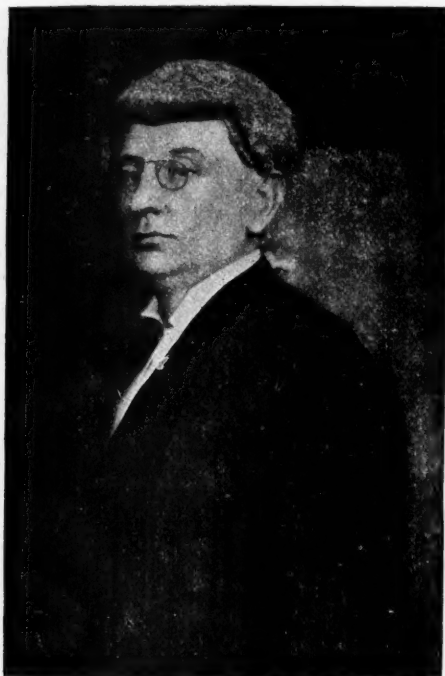
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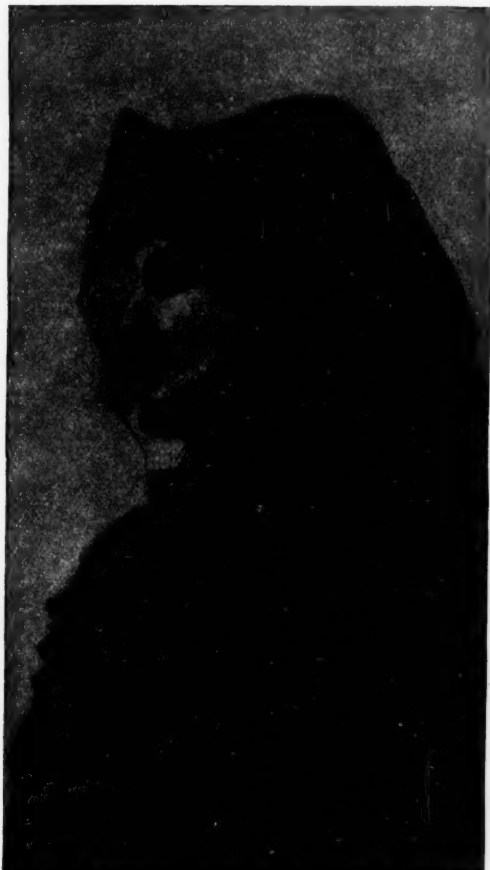
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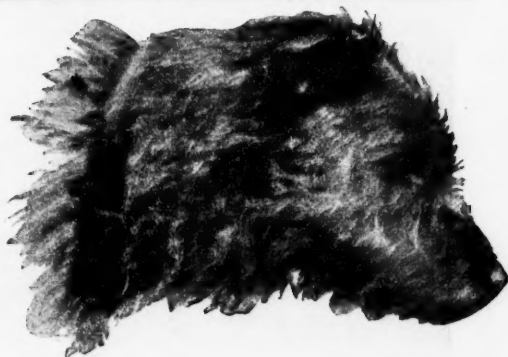
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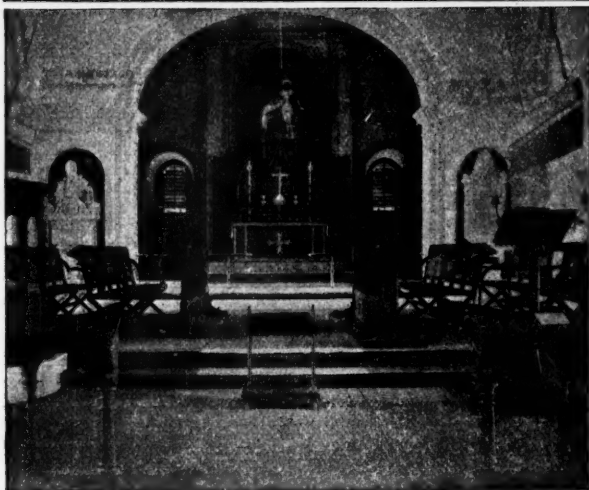
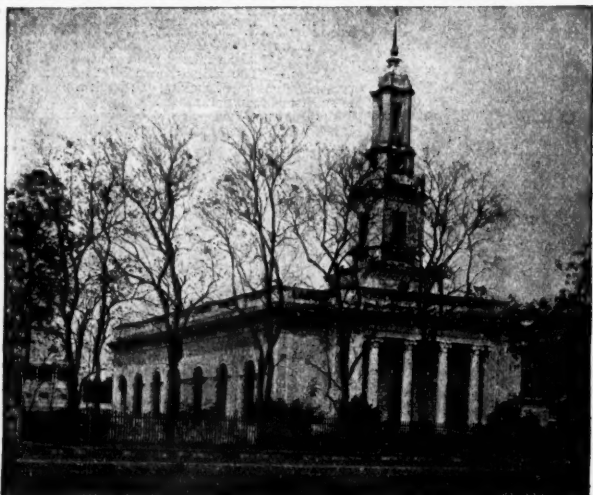
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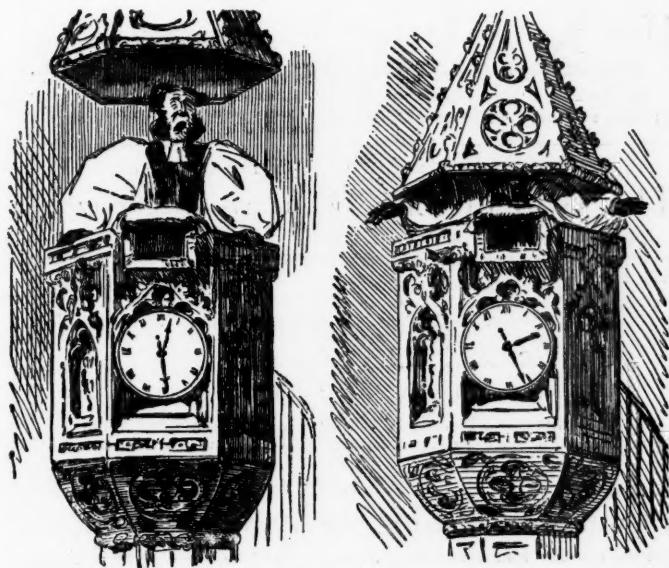
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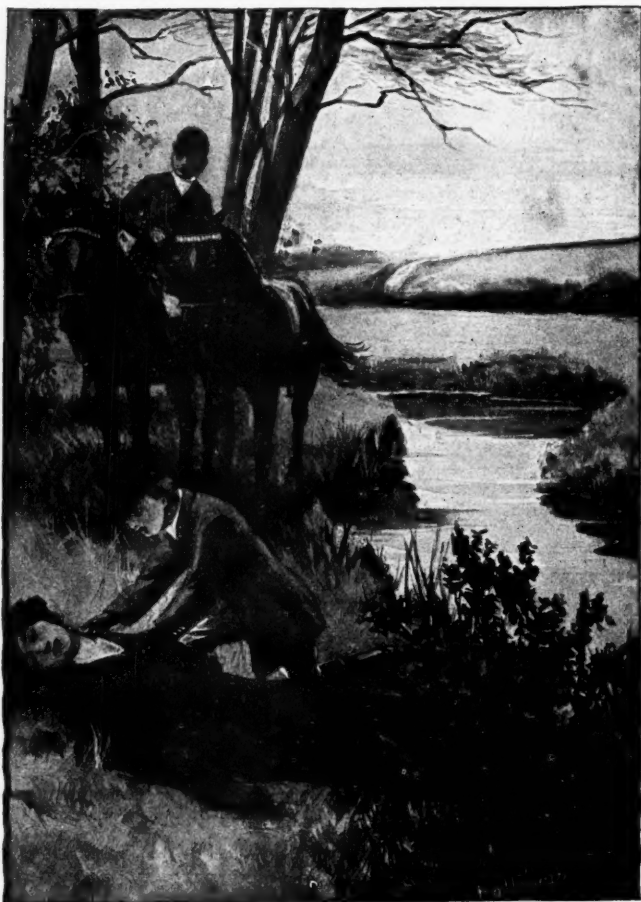
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